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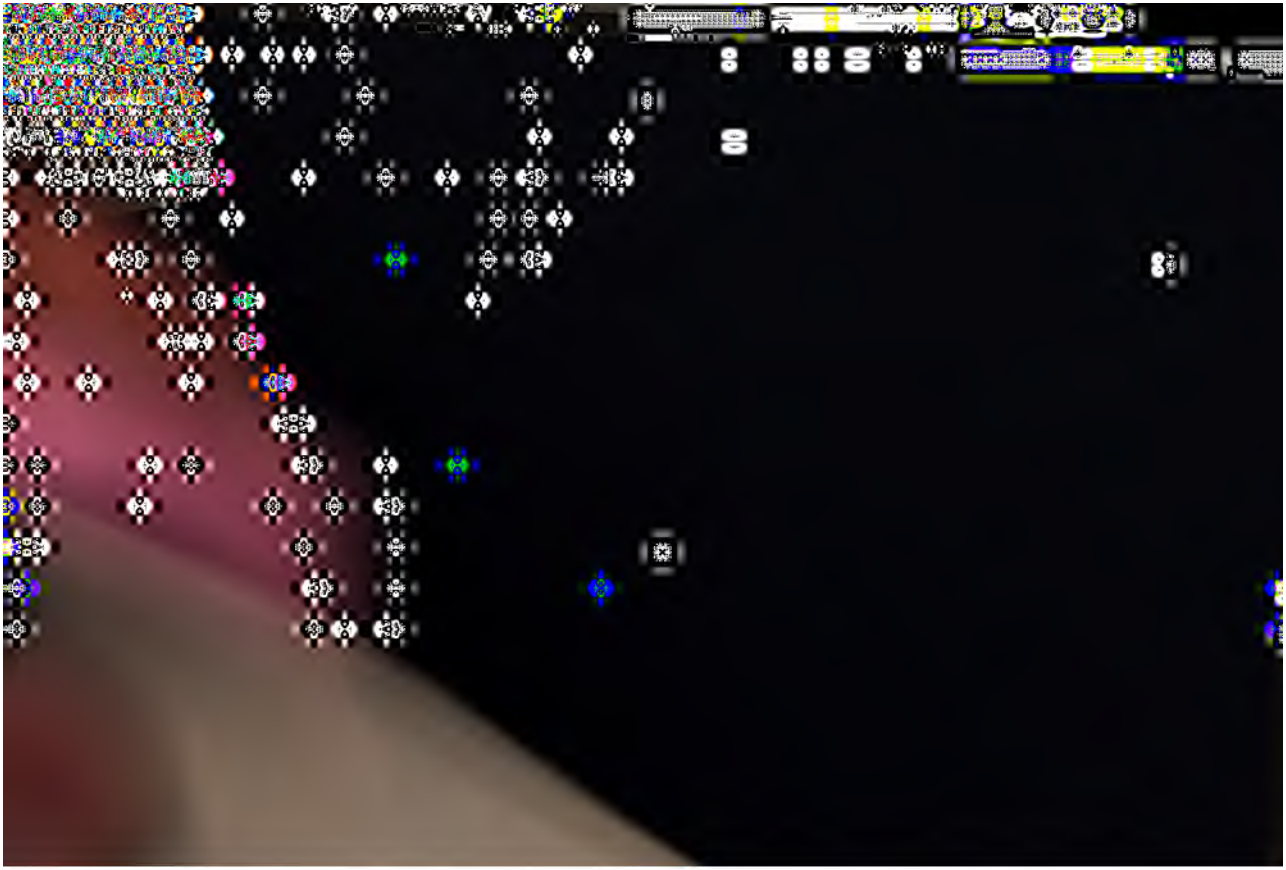

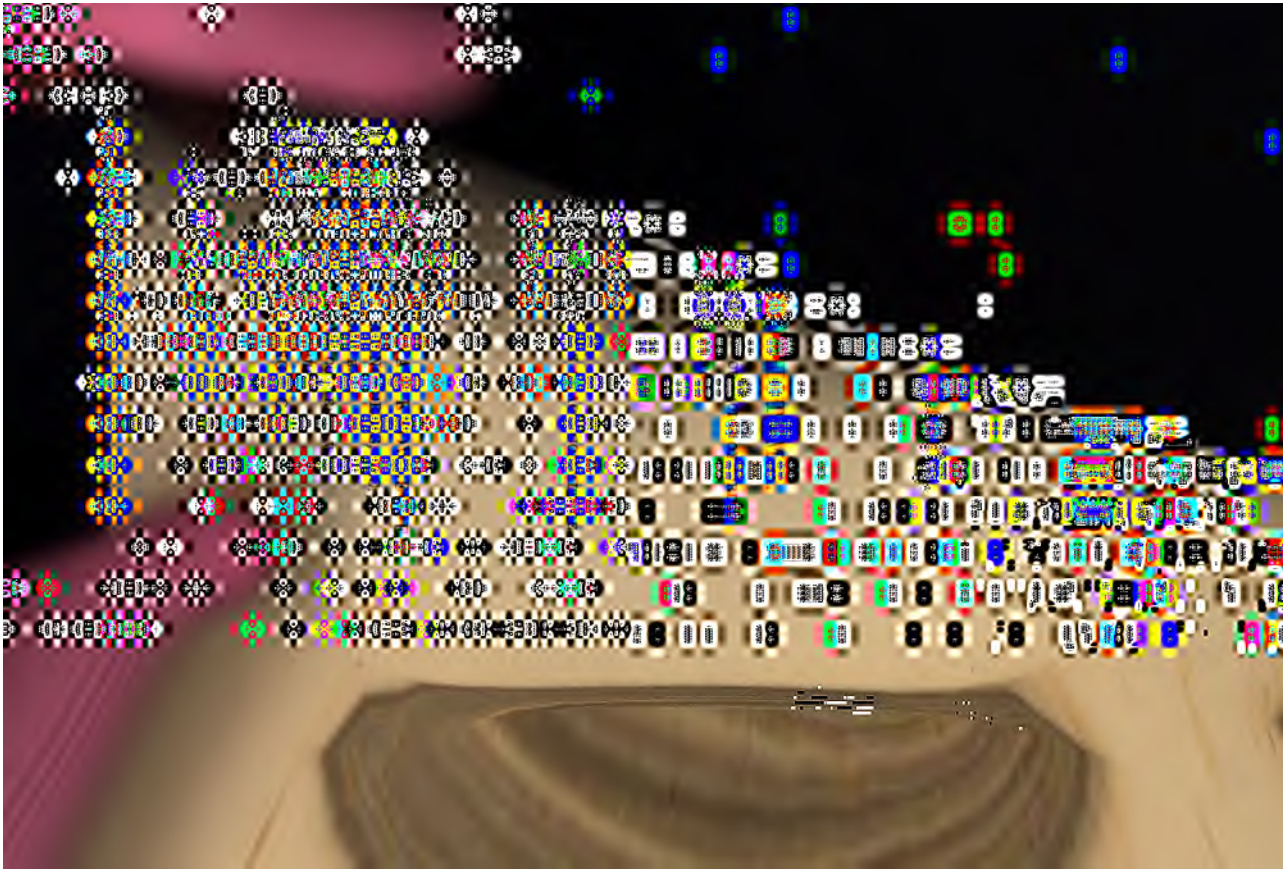

CHRISTIAN IDEALS AND HOPES:

AN

Argument from Moral Beauty.

BY THE

REV. R. ST. JOHN TYRWHITT, M.A.

FORMERLY SENIOR STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD;
AND RHETORIC READER, ETC.

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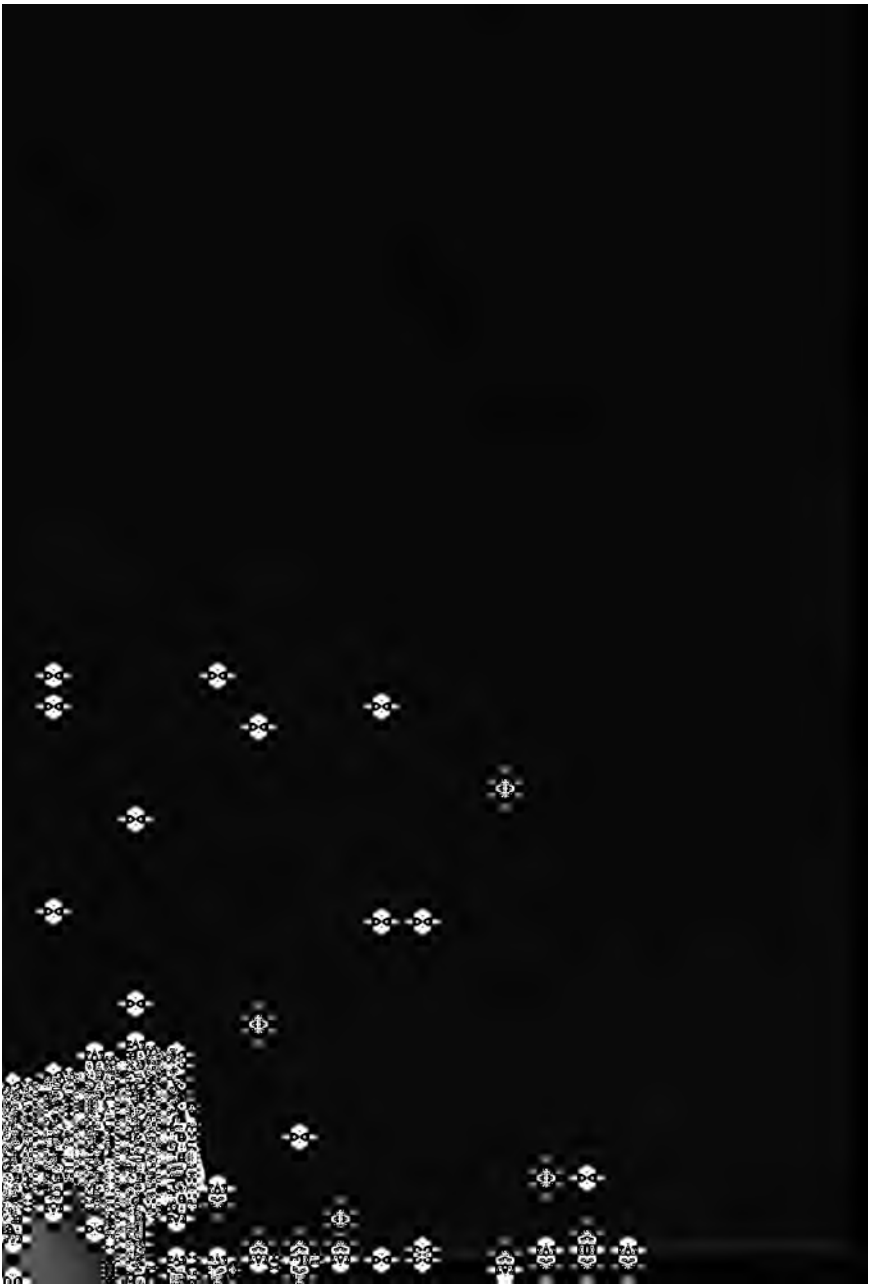
CHRISTIAN IDEALS AND HOPES.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE seems to be reason for attempting further development and application of an argument lately opened in a small book entitled "The Natural Theology of Natural Beauty." It was there set forth that natural beauty has always been a ground of belief in a living God, a means of conjecture about Him, and an encouragement to us to hope for happiness in closer relations to Him in some future state. It was also shewn there that natural beauty is twofold: (*a*) beauty, or excellent contrivance in structure, which appeals to the human intellect, and on which what is called the argument from design is founded; and (*b*) beauty of external appearance, a delight of the eyes, accompanying excellent structure. Both these tend to the idea of a typical quality in the nature of God, which causes beauty in visible things, and which shall ultimately be manifested to us in perfection, even to perfect delight. It was maintained that this habit of conjecture about God and our relations with Him, through natural



as by strong internal evidence, if we can find any rudiments of resemblance to Him in ourselves or other people now. Such rudiments we believe to exist, and we say they constitute, or they involve, moral beauty. Where that is, there is evidence to man, first of God, then of heaven as the promised presence of God. Further, moral beauty has its Ideal, and that Ideal has been realised for us. Its traces and rudiments were long found in mankind: it was fully revealed in fulness of time through the Perfect or Ideal Man, Who was God on earth, Who united Deity and Humanity. Even the modern cultus of Humanity is a deduction from Christianity, and might logically return to it. And we see that Christ our Lord brought life and immortality to light, or to man's clearer conception, in this way also; that He named certain qualities (particularly in the beginning of His Sermon on the Mount) as beatitudes, states of spiritual blessedness, or fitness for heaven and the presence of God. These qualities, then, must be beginnings, and actual foretastes, of higher spiritual conditions assured to their possessors in due time. It seems natural, that if traces of a living Creator of all things for good be found in the outer and inner construction of physical things, so traces of the same Being,

as Father of spirits, may be observed in the human spirit, and become conclusive evidence of its destination; which is ultimately the beatific vision or enjoyment of His presence; as held by the Primitive Church, and expressed in some of her remaining documents.

There never has been a time when personal or practical faith and hope have been too definite, or too powerfully felt. But at present everything which can develope or confirm either seems likely to have unusual value; and it seems highly important to us to look forward, if possible, from what we unquestionably are and possess, little as it all may be, to that which shall be, and shall be ours, by covenant and promise. If the present possession and the future inheritance can be connected; if reasonable ground be given to believe that certain things and qualities here are not only signs and tokens, but anticipations and even beginnings, of the future and eternal, then what are those things, and what is it to possess them? They are at all events ground of faith and effectual comfort in all things to those who will acknowledge them; and they open a question which seems to require re-statement, with such answer as we can give it, as to what Christians really do look for in heaven, which

is the possession of their Ideal; and what they do not expect. Our plan, of course, must be to consider certain subjects in a certain order; and after long reflection, the following scheme is proposed for arrangement and explanation of Christian hopes in all ages concerning heaven, and for dwelling on certain earthly or human realities, within us and without, which are unquestionable, and which appear to be directly connected with that state or condition. By heaven we understand a future, everlasting, and divine happiness, promised as an inheritance after death to the redeemed and forgiven, and consisting in the Presence of God. As to who the redeemed shall be, or how numerous they may be, or what shall become of others, we shall for the present only call attention to the prayer of our Church in the Litany (of which we never yet heard any complaint), "That it may please Thee to have mercy upon all men."

Is there, then, not only analogy but connexion, between any form of happiness, so called, which is attainable on earth, and this expected state of happiness? We say that our Lord has distinctly pointed out to us that there is, in the first part of His Sermon on the Mount. But before considering this, a still more important

terpretations of what we think should be taken by us as caution to think soberly. Nevertheless many explanations and protests are to be made about and against the damnatory view of the Church's expectations, set forth eminently by Gibbon; and also concerning inadequate and ridiculous personal expectations, as given in modern literature. The true hope and outlook of the Christian Church is, in fact, liable to gross misconception and misrepresentation, which needs notice. What we know of future delight through the perceptive senses of sight and hearing must be also considered. Finally, some account will be given of such endeavours at realisation or imaginative representation of the heavenly kingdom as have been made since the days of the Early Church, in poetry or art. We hope to be able to shew that Christian thought on these things—that is to say, the half-formed hopes of the poor and untaught, as well as more methodical and learned speculations—are neither baseless nor contemptible, as we are often told, but natural and salutary efforts at conceiving hoped-for realities, veiled in mystery, but already existing in living rudiment.

CHAPTER I.

OF HAPPINESS IN MORAL BEAUTY.

§ 1. *Use of the word Ideal.*

We take the expression Ideal, or the Ideal, to denote an attempt at realising perfection in any object: such a degree of perfection as shall be satisfactory to that innate desire of it which is one of God's chief gifts to the human spirit. We have, or gradually and with difficulty we acquire, an Idea of Beauty in some of its varied forms, and it is popularly called *our* Ideal when we have set it before the minds of other people in some concrete form, as by poetic description, or the graphic arts. It then becomes our property in a sense, and we obtain less or more credit for having worked it out. We hear and speak, correctly enough, about the ideal of Raphael, the ideal characters of Shakspere, and the ideal landscape of Turner. What we are here concerned with is that a true Ideal, of great things or small, can only be formed from Truth. All Shakspere's characters are true to human nature, even to English nature as observed. Raphael's endless study of the figure needs no comment, nor the certainty that his

best ideals are portraits: and the five volumes of Modern Painters are devoted to illustration of how Naturalism or Realism are united with Idealism in all the voluminous works of Turner. The Ideal is only Nature or Reality in its best form: and what is called Ideal Power consists simply in the gift of inspired selection of the best features and characteristics, from which to compose or work out one's thoughts, of that form, with more or less insight and veracity.

Now, it is reasonable to repeat, as directly suited to the Christian hypothesis, what Plato sets forth in the Hippias Major, in a manner which is somewhat provoking, because it there seems aimless, but which has vital interest when it leads to a point. He there asks the unanswered question, What is that which is beauty in man or woman, in horse and dog, ox and sea-wave, statue and picture, and so on down to furniture and utensils? It was in his mind that this was a Divine quality; and it may have lain unexpressed in his thoughts, or those of Socrates, that God had made man and the other creatures beautiful in their kind, and also through Prometheus, or otherwise beyond understanding, given man creative power, to make vases and goblets, and even spoons and shoes, beautiful in their degree. In short, we

are practically certain from the poetry and graphics of 2000 years and more, that Ideals are great and small, narrow and wide. Plato asked or implied the question, Is there not then an Ideal which is central and all-embracing? wherein all separate features of Beauty are one? which vouchsafes to be or cause Perfection and its approaches? and that in men, above all, who are central objects at least in Creation?

Our answer is, of course, that we have inherited the knowledge of the central Ideal and crown of creation, which Plato desired afar off, as Hebrew sages in their degree. He saw, that the central-ideal Beauty, which man can conceive of but not realise, is Divine. We know that it is realised for man in Christ. The Incarnation contains, in fact, the explanation of all difficulties and mysteries: since in it the Absolute and Infinite or Perfect Being undertook our condition of existence, and thus, in the only way we can conceive of, made Himself known unto men. He took upon Him our flesh, condescending to its limitations for a time: but in so doing He took upon Him the Image in which He Himself had made man: and that Image is still His own. In the Image of God created He Him[1].

[1] See a quotation from Dr. Liddon's Bampton Lectures, given at p. 158.

His Form, then, as visible in history, is our realised ideal of moral beauty: but the word Ideal is applicable, by analogy, to any attempt to realise perfection from data of truth and reality. It applies to our hopes or visions of a perfect state or condition of existence, and the new or eternal life of the kingdom of God. We take all endeavours to realise or create ideals of evil, either as parallel efforts by which its darkest intensity may be conceived of, which may have their uses; or as undesirable developments of human ingenuity likely to do more harm than good, and in some cases of late, apparently directed to that object.

§ 2. *Narrow Limits of Human Conception.*

As the notion of ideal existence even as reserved for ourselves, presents great difficulties to us all, a book on Christian hopes after death, and on a prospective or hypothetical happiness in a world to come, must appeal to a rather uncertain audience at the present day, as in all time past. The number of persons to whom hope of this kind really appears as a prospective reality, and is a part of the inmost personal calculations of life, may be comparatively small, so we are told; and it is certainly smaller than the number of merely professing Christians,

which (as we are also informed by daily literature) is itself greatly reduced. No doubt it is hard to wait and take on trust, even for the little while which seems so long to us. But it is not waiting only, or even waiting in endurance. The great difficulty—a difficulty not unmixed with terror—seems to be our apprehension of an immense and intolerable novelty and strangeness in the world to come; of the shock of entering on entirely new conditions of existence, and of the impossibility of preparing for them, since we cannot succeed in realising what they may be like. There are definite religious terrors, and men fear hell; but besides that they cannot conceive of heaven, or of themselves in it. Whatever it be in our thoughts, local or spiritual, a place of joy and glory, or a state, we all feel that we must be very different persons from what we are before we can be fit to enter and dwell in it. Great joy and glory themselves are things totally unanticipated by the great majority of mankind, and few of us are prepared for them. The routine of life, and its familiar ways of comfort and moderate enjoyment; the accustomed gratifications and pleasures, which please other people like ourselves and not much better than ourselves, are what we really want. We often

feel in our own hearts as if we were not equal to much more. Therefore it is from this simple term of pleasures we are used to, joys and happiness we can partly understand, that the following essay must practically begin. What pleasures, and what other experiences are there, while we are here in the world and in the flesh, which can be considered closely symbolic of those we hope for, of things we truly desire, and at the bottom of our hearts believe in, in spite of our own weakness, our conscious unfitness, and of the terrors of the great change of death? Have we anything on earth within us or without us which can really be symbolic of that which shall be for ever, and which shall be blessedness to us for ever? Pain we know. What actual knowledge and what experience or ripened and reasoned conviction about a state of joy and delight can we have, to counterbalance that much more vivid and ever-ready sense which may be awakened and raised to delirium at any moment by putting one's finger on the hob? We know that there is the contrary experience which we call joy; but we know also that our powers of appreciating or even enduring that are limited. The joy of the spiritual world would certainly instantly separate the soul, which should for one short

ecstasy taste it here, from its shattered nerves and convulsed heart. Flesh is unable to bear the intensity of a new life.

§ 3. *Beauty not of this world.*

Yet is there anything in us, and have we any means of conjecturing the nature of a happiness which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor mental conception presented to the thought of man? Many persons theoretically deny the possibility of such a thing. It is no doubt possible to reject or maintain systematic indifference to all our data; some men and women are so entirely indisposed to attend to this subject, or so preoccupied with others, or so prepossessed to the disadvantage of those whose business it is to deal with this, that we need not address them. On the other hand, it is certain that there are many who are drawn to this subject; and some classification of such data as we possess may possibly be acceptable to readers of this kind. They will be specially gratified to recognise in themselves the rudiments of qualities, powers, and features of character or spirit (can any such be proved to exist) which may be thought of as likely to survive the change of death, and to have a future development in

the life to come. Such qualities or characteristics are symbolic and something more; they are means of anticipation, they bear relation to, they may be said to *resemble*, the future reality. In these respects we feel ourselves, in some sense, "that we shall be."

Now, there is a great body of spiritual experience in this world which goes by the name of Beauty, and it is with this we wish to begin. It has been contended in another book that all ages of mankind have looked to beauty as symbolic of God, of the Divine, of the Source of all good, of the living God. That is to say, we think with Plato, and with certain select ancients of Greek race, that beauty or excellence, as we see it,—moral, and even material beauty of structure and exterior,—may enable us to reason rightly from many beautiful things to one source and essence of beauty. "He who rising upwards from these things, begins to see that beauty, is not far from the end. And the true end of going or being is to use the beauties of earth as steps along which one mounts upwards for the sake of that other beauty; going to all fair forms, and from fair forms to fair practices, and from fair practices to fair thoughts, until from fair thoughts he arrives at the notion of absolute beauty, and at last knows what the

essence of beauty is[1]." This is in fact Plato's heaven, or his highest notion of spiritual blessedness; it is a conjectural approach of the soul to God by means of dwelling on ideals of beauty and goodness, as progressive manifestations of good, and even of the living God. This is sanctioned by revelation, and it has indeed raised and comforted Christian souls as well as heathen. Nevertheless when we speak of beauty, physical or moral, as symbolic of the Divine, we do not mean that His perfect beauty is like human beauty, but analogous to it. Human, and all other beauty observed in nature, may afford us data for conjecture; first, about His qualities, as love, power, wisdom (which, manifested in Him, we do not take as commensurable with their shadows observable in ourselves). Then we think the various phenomena and experiences of beauty we have here may be renewed, intensified, purified, expanded, and made means of knowing Him in another state of being; for those, at least, who have served Him here in love and piety, and earnest search for Him. And if this be so, there will be like or analogous experiences in the future state to some of our experiences here, and we may argue, though

[1] Plato, *Symposium*, Jowett's translation, i. pp. 517–526, ed. 1871; ii. p. 51, ed. 1875.

cautiously and tentatively, from the latter to the former; and, as was said before, a large class of those experiences, fruitful of spiritual knowledge, bears the name of beauty, in one sense or another.

§ 4. *Moral and Material Beauty.*

These senses are various; and perhaps it may be well for us to follow Plato's method for a while, and with due caution, and to consider beauty as the manifestation, at unknown distance, of a divine perfection. It may be beauty of structure which illustrates perfect wisdom and power; it may be external form and colour, which raise the spirit of man in aspiration to perfect being; it may be, what Plato's philosophy was not yet systematic enough to have formally distinguished,—it may be moral beauty, which points not only to a perfect spiritual being, but to the affinity of man's soul to that perfection. It will be seen that beauty of structure contains all that science calls beautiful, and beauty of exterior all artistic charm; natural or physical beauty all right or genuine delight of the eye; and moral beauty all delights drawn from contemplation of spiritual excellence. Under moral or spiritual beauty, again, we arrange what we call beauty of ex-

pression, of association, of relation, of spirit, mind, virtue, and holiness, and the like. These are different from the other forms of beauty. But the world is possessed with a conviction that they are real and genuine qualities, possessed by various men and women, developed in their works and even looks; and producing emotions of pleasure and admiration in the same way as the more tangible forms of beauty. They all, in their pure forms, do elevate the human spirit in the same way. We say, in their pure forms, because the term material beauty has been admitted, and we may be told that material beauty is often associated with impurity. To this we have only to say, not inseparably; that though they are found together, they are not therefore the same thing, nor essentially connected. Medea's ferocity has nothing to do with her beauty; Messalina would be more beautiful if she behaved herself decently. A certain charm or delight of the eye is attached to physical matter and its forces; and that is not at once destroyed when the soul which informs a certain quantity of beautiful matter falls into sin. The just wrath, the outbursting energies of Medea, add to her beauty, in certain moments of violent feeling; but it is the momentarily awakened intensity

of life we all admire in passion, not the hatred or cruel purpose; and so of the gentler and more tempting frailties[1].

§ 5. *Moral Beauty as observed.*

Now it would seem, and it may be asserted with every appearance of truth, that as beauty of design resolves itself into a great argument for a benevolent and omnipotent Creator of the visible world, and external beauty leads the soul on in conjecture about Him, moral beauty in all its variations developes a parallel argument concerning Him in the invisible world. Thither all men feel that they are hastening, and there many men hope—as they say in words of His, past understanding—to see Him as He is, or to know even as they are known.

[1] We do not think it necessary here to repeat Mr. Mallock's quotations from Mme. de Maupin, not having read or intending to read that work ourselves. Vice blaspheming against nature is no new thing; nor are we here concerned with it. The value of intensity *versus* beauty, as an object of art, is altogether out of our way at present, excepting the remark that it seems less justifiable to prefer the former to the latter in painting than in poetry or literature. In portraiture especially, questions of extraordinary interest arise as to selecting a particular moment of feeling or passion, which are out of our way now.

External, or pure beauty stands, as it were, between the material and moral worlds, yet is connected, beyond disengagement even in thought, with both of them. It is a phenomenon thrown off from the object momentarily, and as by waves and flashes, like light or the bow of heaven. It is an experience of the subject; when we have it, we know it; we conjecture of its source and its future. Once seen, it is a possession of our souls, and we may all believe that a thing of beauty may be, in serious earnest, a joy for ever.

Let us see, then, if Christian meditation on the world to come, and on our own practical share of it, can receive help or guidance from meditation in moral beauty as we note it here. External or artistic, structural or scientific, excellence, are alike displayed to teach us to adore, to raise our thoughts to the thought of a divine perfection. In thinking of our own future, we think of a promised share in that perfection, whatever it is. And we ask, Has its ideal been seen? and then, supposing we cannot now see that with eyes, still what typical presentations of it have we? what real moral fairness can we see in others, or even in ourselves? and can we argue from that to a future happiness, as we virtually can from other types

of beauty, excellence, and delight, which we unquestionably find in this world?

We answer, our Lord once walked on earth, a realised and visible Ideal. And in the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount He tells us that foreshadowings of a future perfection may exist in our fellows and in ourselves. If it be so, they and we are blessed accordingly. To be among these blessed ones here is to be virtually though imperfectly what we shall be in perfection hereafter; and by these tokens we may conjecture of ourselves and our companions. Certain present capabilities of ours shall be indefinitely developed for our blessedness. These in Christians are called Christian virtues; to possess them is beatitude. Their ideal or perfect possessor is He Who is both God and Man. Consequently we speak briefly of Him first, as the human ideal realised in God, Whom we seek and shall find; and next of these qualities as imperfectly possessed here, and as we hope to experience them hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

MORAL IDEAL OF HAPPINESS.

Positive and Negative Methods.

ALL our speculations on the unknown realities of the spiritual or preternatural world must be made by the positive or negative methods, which are distinguishable, though often concurrent. We may think what we hope to be, and to cease to be, to gain or get rid of; but then of course to gain one quality is to get rid of its contradictory. We are taking the positive way first. We shall be in, and we shall live with others in, the likeness of our Lord. Also we are informed of various facts or things which shall be, in Holy Scripture; and this information often takes the form of descriptive detail, as we may call it, as chiefly in the Revelations of St. John. The negative method points to the cessation of evil in all its forms and effects; and is supposed by many to be the only true method of meditation[1]. The beatitudes must

[1] As (apparently) by Dean Milman, History of Latin Christianity, vol. ix. p. 97, ed. 1861, on Richard of Hampole.

certainly be taken as containing much positive information of what heaven will be like; but we must also consider, at reverent distance, in what moral form He manifested Himself on earth, Whom we do most humbly and at indefinite distance, desire with desire to be like and to be with. For though this desire be ill-realised, forgotten, neglected, it is still the genuine and prevailing aspiration of all Christians who believe in Christ—wildly, fearfully, contemptibly, or hideously unlike Him as we may most of us be. We are many of us sick of ourselves in good earnest, and our only hope is to be out of ourselves at last, and live a life in Him, whatever that shall be like; for that is our end.

The Christian ideal has been presented to us, it may be said, in a practical manner, and to a sufficient extent to guide our lives in this world until its full realisation in the next. The life and human character (so to call it) of our Lord on earth is given us for our example: it appears that in this way and no other it pleased God to manifest Himself to men; and as He taught and lived we have to do, so far as circumstances, chiefly those of our own frailty, will permit us. It follows that the chief principle of our life must be imitation of the leading

characteristic of His: and also, that when we are brought indefinitely nearer to Him in a future state, that that leading feature will be our chief delight; which is as much as to say, that Love is the centre of the Christian ideal, and that all our spiritual life and happiness—all we ought to be and want to be—centres in this wondrous word and the ideas it conveys. It is not necessary for us to consider, just now or here, how the word has been, is, and will be profaned, by falsehood and insult. The thing itself is indeed beyond range of evil, or doubt, or questions of kind or degree, or any qualification whatever. God is love; and the essence of true love is with God. In manifesting this to and for all men, He made Himself manifest to the world. He has indeed sought and found men. His drawing all men unto Him by the final sacrifice is no figure of speech whatever, but as real a thing in the spirit as the loadstone in the physical world. The love of God Who died for man, is the most powerful principle known to man. Evolution is a phrase; it is the formula of a half-developed and sufficiently orthodox theory, which any Christian in his senses may study or let pass as he has time. But the love, or repulsion from the love, of Jesus Christ Who is our Lord, is an agent

which will not let him pass. It may be embraced, or sought and yielded to even to death: it may be resisted and finally rejected—as far as finite perversity can deal with that which has no end. But it is there, and it is presented to every man within range of the Christian dispensation. And among other forms in which it is tendered to all, it is presented as the Way of life; as that principle which, if a man obey it, shall be everlasting happiness, and to be indefinitely continued in him—as a well of water springing up into eternal life.

We may well deeply lament, with all Christian admirers of material philosophy, that so many of its professors should have identified their pursuit with atheism. The scientific mind seems now definable as a mind which will admit no spiritual fact, but will deal only with mathematics or experimental physics as sources of truth. This we shall suffer from, and our children after us. Still, other mental orders and species exist, to whom this book may be addressed, and may appear to be founded on rational data. And such persons may be asked to distinguish between the Christian faith and life and the world's awful and enormous perversions of both; and to say if this great principle of love or desire of the true and infinite good of all men

has not ruled the lives of countless people, imperfectly and as it could, yet to the construction and preservation of vast societies and civilisations, which could not have been without it, which would dissolve if it were withdrawn, to which it is as salt, as life-blood, as medium of respiration and support, within and without. Mohamed shewed acuteness of observation and thoughtful honesty in moderate speech, when he argued for the reality of God's presence with men from this, "That ye have pity one on another." He may have adapted the Christian command to love one another to what seemed possible for the tribes of the desert. But the fact is, in spite of all the blood-red records of dissension and persecution, Christians have loved each other or forborne each other to great purpose. And the infernal consequences of their error and fall from their own rule only bear testimony to what that rule is, and what it would have done if obeyed. We have little opportunity of comparing its operation with any materialistic system in operation, and none with any constructive organisation of that kind. Atheism as an executive has always devoted itself to destruction, on a scale proportioned to its strength; and has always succeeded in destroying itself (as an organisation) in too

short a time for anything like conclusive observation of other result. But from Gibbon's 15th chapter downwards, the evil deeds of bad Christians in power have been duly set in note-books, learned and conned by rote for polemical purposes. What we would observe is, that Christian faith and love works in the individual spirit, in the personal thoughts, words, and deeds of men, women, and children, with each other. These are seldom matter of history, and in these, in the personal life, the kingdom of God is prepared, and cometh not with observation. Those who read the history of the Dark Ages, of certain periods of the Renaissance, of the state of France before and during the Revolution, may wonder that the population of the world did not eat each other, and give place to the beasts of the field. The real stay of society, through savage inroad and the worse explosions of corrupted civilisation, has been the remnant of Christian love and life, the relics of Christian injunction and principle, which tamed the onset of the barbarian, and, at least in the Teutonic races, set limit to the rage of the persecutor. We think there is a Divine love which shall be our happiness in heaven: we think it has been manifested on earth, and that earth still retains traces of it, which are

foretastes to those who find them. But these foretastes are matters of personal experience and personal hope. The hope is no less than that of finding at last a Personal Lover of souls. In His presence the fulness of joy is a natural consequence and matter of course for evermore. It is probably for the sake of this and other kindred ideas connected with the word 'personal,' that it is so earnestly contended for by most Theists as applicable to God. And if, in that application, it mean a Deity capable of, and in fact loving, each of us personally to all eternity —if a hope no less than that is expressed by it, whatever may become of the word or be substituted for it, nobody, who has once possessed the idea, will ever give it up to the end of time.

For this is the Christian ideal of final happiness, or heaven; and this alone profits, and other things satisfy not. "Fecisti nos ad Te, Domine, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in Te." Surely it seems a natural or probable thing that the soul which has come forth from God, which in its state of untaught conjecture of Him has been enabled to conceive of itself, with assurance, as remembering some past state of nearness to Him; which has had His own revelation of Himself, which has been taken

into covenant with Him, and had the first-fruits of the Holy Spirit, should at length, in returning to Him, find its true home and perfect state, its rest and harmony, its final deliverance and restoration.

We can only see as in a glass darkly; and can only think in material modes, and imagine or describe with the help of material analogies or symbols. But if we started from the words 'God is love,' if we noted, among the countless testimonies which men have borne to them in life and death, only the end of Dante's Divine Comedy,—

"Here vigour failed the towering fantasy,
But yet the will roll'd onward, like a wheel
In even motion, by the Love impelled
That moves the sun in heaven and all the stars[1],"—
(Cary's Dante, *Paradise*, xxxiii. 132)

we might go on to conceive for ourselves, as believers in spirit, what must be the result, to differently prepared souls, of the final, spiritual

[1] "La mia mente fu percussa
Da una fulgore, in che sua voglia venne
Alle alta fantasia qui manco possa:
Ma gia volgeva il mio disiro e 'l velle,
Sì come ruota che igualmente è mossa,
L'Amor che muove 'l Sole e l' altre stelle."
PARADISO, xxxiii. fin.

contact with, or full consciousness of, the presence of that love personified. Some may never enter that presence; or it may be to them a consuming fire, a penal torment of shame and longing, a love stronger than death, more cruel than the grave. We are not now considering what it may be to those who shall have finally rejected it. But one cannot but think of it as involving a final purification, perhaps as by fire, from every stain of inherited or actual sin[1]. Knowing something of love and forgiveness in this world, and speaking of them simply as emotions, there can be no doubt that they possess, in all human souls which retain the human form, a melting and searching power which is almost incalculable, and may be imagined, in full development, as transfiguring the soul altogether. Pure and intense affection certainly shews itself from time to time as really stronger than death in tangible result. What may it not be when the soul reaches its source, and is again with God, who is her home? With more or less consciousness and precision, this seems to have been the meditative hope of some of the greatest and clearest souls who ever departed in the Christian faith. There is no

[1] The end of "The Dream of Gerontius" sets forward this idea with great power and beauty.

occasion to compare, still less to oppose, Roman Catholic and Protestant imagery on this matter. For members of all Christian communions the personal hope amounts to this—To have long sought God in Christ through all weakness, and to find Him at length in glory.

CHAPTER III.

THE BEATITUDES.

THE invention of the terms 'positive' and 'negative' goodness or happiness is not our fault, and we are of course unable to disregard the distinction which it conveys. It will be briefly discussed in the next chapter: but it seems that our use of the terms 'positive' and 'negative' must be vague and cautious when we come to consider the beatitudes, or conditions of the human spirit consonant with true blessedness, which are enumerated to us in St. Matt. v. and St. Luke vi. 20. It is quite possible to think of meekness as the absence of anger, and mercy as the negative of revenge. The point is, that these words affect actual conduct, and connote genuine qualities. They are virtues, moral habits which direct action in the man, points of true manhood. Of course, without positive love of God and of our neighbour, they cannot practically exist, and they may certainly be taken as positive terms. Of course in their presence we shall be delivered from their absence; and

that is one form in which true hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be satisfied.

Now the beatitudes among other things seem to describe the constituent qualities of forgiven and accepted souls, admitted to the Kingdom of Heaven, in the state of full restoration with indefinite progress towards perfection. To be as one of these, blessed of God in possessing and for possessing true meekness, purity of heart, tenderness; to possess these qualities consciously by His gift and infusion, so as to feel Him consciously a part of our spiritualised being; to be so far identified with Him in will, yet continue ourselves, so as to rejoice in Him; to be one of a countless multitude of individualities delighted like ourselves with the same presence; to see God with them, whatever those great and mysterious words mean:—what manner of prospect is this? To us it seems at all events a spiritual prospect of spiritual happiness; that is to say, of happiness not to be diminished, interrupted, or interfered with by anything whatever we know of. If men will say it is nothing, and no prospect, they must say so, and we may say in our turn, that granting these words, in which our hopes are expressed, to convey any ideas at all, they carry far the strongest and subtlest idea of happiness, beyond bodily pleasure,

that ever was conveyed at all. They open such a path of conjecture, open to all the world, as never was unveiled before or since. Plato's highest hope, the final ideal of his ideas, the consummation of man's search after God, may be construed fairly enough into this. The Sophron, the happily constituted, the well-balanced, the winged man of natural inspirations and aspirations, born to remember Paradise and seek God, reaches at length the goal of all moral beauty and goodness, and becomes one with it, being drawn and led to it by itself in mystery, through inward desire which expresses itself in virtuous life. Here in the beatitudes we have our Lord's words for it in practical drift, that this progress and consummation of blessedness shall be for every man who will seek it and Him, for every one who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, for all the meek and pure in heart and poor in spirit. Nay, He makes the immeasurable promise of blessing to all who mourn, words which no human creature, none but God Himself manifest in flesh, could utter to the sighing sons of men.

It is doubtless true—that is to say, it has been the case and will be again—that men frame to themselves heavens as they imagine to themselves gods; states suitable to themselves, and

beings like themselves. Greeks did so, making gods in their own image. Well, we say this—our ideal of a heavenly condition is not in *our* own image: it is in the image of God yet left in us. We start by owning Him, His rudimentary blessings, in such Christian virtues as Christian men actually possess in this world. You can deny them if you like—Gibbon did so indirectly and with great ingenuity. He did not say there were no such things as Christian virtues, but displayed every form of weakness and wickedness which Christians could be guilty of, and represented, as in a picture, that there was nothing else in the Christian; nothing but vice, fanaticism, and baseness; that there was no working or evidence of God in the Christian. We distinctly hope there is; and that this working in its due and final development will produce a happiness, at present rightly described by the beatitudes, and very far above any imagined by Mohamed, Marcus Aurelius, or their voluminous apologist. This our hope is here already in symbol and earnest: certain foretastes and imaginations are ours on earth. That is to say, they belong to all sorts of common people on earth. They are not esoteric arcana, or fairy tales of science, but every-day developments of every-day characters. *Nos*

numerus sumus. Christianity is a thing of the markets and the streets: the philosophers and prefects of the Roman decadence despised it accordingly, and exactly the same contempt haunts the philosophic mind to this day. But so it is, that the hopes held out by Christianity after death are, first, more definite by far than Roman, Greek, or Mohamedan prospects: secondly, they are far more searching, lofty, and spiritual, because a heaven of the virtues is higher than a heaven of the pleasures: thirdly, they are for any of the poor and the weak; any publican and sinner may feel himself called and invited to share them, and he has unquestionably something within him which is akin to them. Christianity makes no offer of equality to please democratic envy, it offers equal happiness, which seems enough. A royal saint's beatitude is in Christ; so is a mechanic's or a washerwoman's.

From man's moral nature, and its contact with outer circumstances (or its environments, if the word must be used), Butler evolved his argument of analogy: not to take the place of positive evidences of God or of the faith, as he protests, and his latest critics will not allow; but for demonstration that the things seen point to similar natures in things unseen. In the same way, by analogy of certain internal qualities

of man, which on our hypothesis are gifts of God, we are enabled to reason to a possibility of His giving man entire blessedness through their infinite development; and through their finally reaching Him in its course; whatever all these words may mean when experienced as realities. If these qualities are here, they are the working of God—we say of God in Christ; and they are here as irrefragable facts. A man's or woman's mercifulness or purity of heart are as real things as the eye or the ear: and as these organs of the senses were meant to enable us to see and hear, so the moral qualities are to enable us to live in peace and honour of inner life.

Again: we may call further attention to this our belief that all good in us is part of God's working, because it points to our hopes already alluded to, of personal love, reward, and comfort to be received of Him in His Kingdom. He is the Comforter in this world; He sustained, upheld, and exalted all along, and we shall know Him there by what He is now doing for us. We may repent what seems to us the very important difference between a heaven of the presence of God and a heaven of anything else; of Olympian beauty, of Moslem sensuality—of

> "Houris for boys, omniscience for sages,
> And wings and glories for all ranks and ages."

All these are heavens of the pleasures of the world, over again, and made pleasant for ever; which is inconceivable. The other conception is of a Kingdom of God within us. It may be begun here, in certain rudimentary movements of God's presence in the soul on earth, and completed by blessedness in perfect possession of or by Him. We look for no less a thing than this, and our expectations are not subject either to the rebukes or the sarcasms with which they are often saluted.

It is essential to Christian meditation on this difficult subject, which nevertheless we cannot help pursuing, that we ourselves remember that our hopes are spiritual, and guard ourselves from carnal interpretations of them, if we cannot prevent other persons from imputing such errors to us. The Sermon on the Mount seems to contain all the principles and deepest casuistry of Christian life, beginning with its promises of future blessedness already present in prepared or preparing souls. Containing few distinct assertions of doctrine, it is probably the most universally accepted portion of the New Testament: as most unbelievers condescend to approve it, if it be only to compare the lives of Christian people with it, as Gibbon did, and to show how visionary were the hopes of the "blameless enthusiast" who uttered it of ever

getting anybody to live in obedience to His words. And therefore we must ask ourselves and others, in the first place, whether it is true or false that any person or persons in this world are, or steadily try to become, pure in heart, merciful, meek, peacemakers, and the like? And if there are—if we know anybody of that description, whether he is not a better person to live with from his being like that? We have ourselves unquestionably experienced such persons, and found them desirable company, and desired to be like them; and we think that a kingdom entirely composed of such characters, developed in fulness, would be very happy indeed to live in. Such people on earth might indeed love each other's persons and society. But remove bodily troubles, thwartings, mistakes, temptations, and weaknesses; give this body of harmless enthusiasts one central enthusiasm called love of God in Christ; make all their spirits converge on the Father of their spirits in joy and adoration;—and to be with them and of them will seem a highly ideal condition; a state in which everybody shall have somehow emerged beyond reach of moral evil, or any evil, and where all shall share in central happiness, and none ever weary of its continual expression.

Why should any be weary of it? This may lead us to consider some of the misconceptions which prevent many persons from thinking rightly on this subject, and some from thinking of it at all. There is an objection which seems to be entertained—not by untaught or brutal persons only, but by many of the highly-cultured—to a heavenly condition of continual praise: and this must be considered in its turn, though what has gone before may tend to reassure ordinary people about it. But we must now proceed to consider the negative and positive sides of our future happiness, and some of the wider misconceptions and misstatements of views of the Christian Church on that subject.

CHAPTER IV.

NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS AND THEIR MISCONCEPTIONS.

We must regret the extreme difficulty of observing proper order, or keeping up any methodical separation of the various parts of our subject. When we think of Christian imaginations of Heaven, negative and positive, we cannot help seeing that they are adequate only in a sense, often obviously inadequate. Our conceptions are narrowly limited, and these things are beyond them. But we find further, that ideas concerning the future Kingdom of God are attributed to us, which in fact we do not hold: that simple people often form simple anthropomorphic ideas of the blessedness of saints, and that they and their hopes are in consequence despised by the educated, and particularly by the half-educated classes. Further, their often grotesque anticipations are attributed to reasoning thoughtful Christians, and a general and entire vagueness and absurdity of anticipation is supposed to prevail. It seems to be thought that everybody has his own notions of Heaven, as he has his own notions of beauty;

and that one person's are as good as another's, none being worth anything. Much in this way Xenophanes scandalised all Greek mythology by saying that red-haired Kelts would certainly believe in red-haired gods; and the coloured inhabitants of our colonies used to be popularly supposed to believe in a white devil, by rule of contrary. But they may perhaps have argued from the complexion and conduct of their masters.

We find it convenient then, to take up the negative method of inquiry first; and to endeavour to set forth first what we gladly expect to be delivered from; and secondly, what we do not expect to enjoy; it being asserted or insinuated of us that some of our anticipations are absurd, and some in fact wicked. What we look for as positive happiness is also subjected to highly satirical comment: but to exemplify the terms negative and positive, we may do well to refer to a passage already named from the works of the late Dean of St. Paul's.

The author of "Latin Christianity[1]" cites "a description of Paradise according to its ordinary conception, almost the only possible conception —life without any of its evils," from a poem called the "Pricke of Conscience," by Richard

[1] Vol. ix. p. 97, Book xiv. Pt. ii. (1867).

Rolle de Hampole, quoted from MSS. by Turner, Hist. of England, v. 233, and older than Chaucer. Thus it runs—

"There is lyf withoute ony deth,
And ther is youthe withoute ony elde,
And ther is alle manner welth to welde,
And ther is reste without ony travaille,
And ther is pees without ony strife,
And ther is alle manner likyng of life,
And ther is bright somer ever to be,
And ther is never wynter in that countree,
And ther is more worship and honour
Than ever hadde kynge other emperor.
And ther is greter melodie of aungeles songe,
And ther is preysing him amonge,
And ther is alle manner friendship that may be,
And ther is ever perfect love and charitie,
And ther is wisdom withoute folye,
And ther is honeste without vilenye.
Alle these a man may joyes of Hevene call,
And yette the most sovereign joye of alle
Is the sight of Goddes bright face,
In whom resteth alle manere grace."

This is certainly well worth quoting, though we think it involves more and higher data of anticipation for all men than deprivation of evil only. And it is especially useful as illustrating the difficulties of a subject in which the most vivid emotions and powerful ideas are created by apparently negative symbols of thought. It will be seen that one great feature of this

description raises it far above the mere conception of human life without any of its evils. This is the sight of God's face; meaning of course in the first instance the final fruition of the beatific vision. But this description, like some of the expressions in the Apocalypse in which negative language is used, is associated with positive ideas of God's personal blessing and intense, melting, and overpowering happiness conveyed by it. "The tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he shall dwell with them, and be with them, and be their God[1]." "And there shall be no more curse[2]," we are told. He shall withdraw the curse which is our share of evil, in everything we have to deal with; which is sin to the child, and frost to the flower, and death in life. His act shall take it from us, or us from it; and all joy of relief shall be His, and in Him, and it shall be tenfold more than the cessation of pain. We take the negative side of our hopes, because we do not in fact know what His dwelling with us shall be, and we do know that this world is in fact very evil, and a place of pain to most persons, and at times to all. All find their hopes of deliverance easier to realise than a joy and glory which they have not known. But Christians think

[1] Rev. xxi. 3. [2] Rev. xxii. 3.

of a promised Comforter, and of something at the least of a personal reconciliation, return, reunion with Him the express image of God, in whom we were made. The terms 'negative' and 'positive' happiness seem useful, as leading to explanations; and we have after deliberation committed ourselves to the use of them. But certainly either of them may be applied to the same feature of our happiness in very many cases as we please. Plato and Aristotle use the term 'mixed pleasures,' not meaning by it polluted or dubious enjoyments, but pleasures complicated with and dependent on previous want and longing, like the satisfaction of hunger and thirst. And so our future blessedness may be the satisfaction of a want, of a hunger and thirst after righteousness; and if those words come true to us, we shall not probably think much whether we are rejoicing in the negative cessation of painful longing, or the positive satisfaction of the desire of righteousness. The fact is we anticipate a positive and never-failing joy of thankfulness from the deliverance, which renders the negative and positive distinction only a convenience of human language. The expression "He shall wipe off all tears from all faces,"—that indescribably tender and human promise, made as to children long crying in

the night, may have probably drawn many tears in secret from bearded men. It is an undefined promise, which every individual prisoner of hope defines for himself. And there is no doubt that collectively, and as human creatures knowing something of the human tale, we find that men see and say more of sorrow than of joy, of evil and indignation, than of good or delight in it; so that it is easier to think of rest than of joy, to give effective descriptions of hell than of heaven; as a hundred read Dante's *Inferno* for ten who can get through the *Paradise*. Well, we shall be made pure of sin and the conscience of sin, of pain and the memory of pain, of loss and sense of loss. And we are taught to muse on fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore; and all is the same thing, all this is in the same state, all these are emotions of the human spirit made perfect. Perhaps they are personal and different in each spirit, perhaps modified in adoration of the sacrifice of redemption, and by the sight of Him Whom we have pierced. The sense of sin, and genuine personal penitence here, is necessary to imaginative realisation of our personal happiness hereafter. And that is the true reason why literary conjecture fails in subtlety, and cannot understand our hopes or their foundation. We hold

that we have sinned against a Divine Person, who is our Ideal in all things, and who can and will make us pure of sin and like Himself. Therefore we desire change in ourselves, and we want to be perhaps as different from what we are as our opponents would have us. Therefore we turn to Dante, and let him speak for us in the Purgatorio[1]. There the hope of the soul under purgation, that is to say, the Christian soul conscious of its real condition in this strange world, is written down, and this is ours while we are here. The state of penitence is entered by three steps; one of clear marble, for confession and self-abandonment; the second, of hard black stone, broken crossways, for conviction and penitence; the third, a great and massive one, of flaming porphyry, for the Blood of Christ. The ashy-coloured angel of the Gate traces on the forehead of the entering spirit seven P's for Peccata, representing his mortal sins. So he passes, forbidden to look back, into the state of probationary pain, and once within he cannot look back. Thenceforth his will is entirely penitent: he desires the pains which make him pure, he desires no deliverance until he is pure; when he is free from one punishment, and not before, he desires to go on to

[1] ix. 73.

another, and so to the end. This is a condition of mind with which many on our side are in part acquainted; and it is no use saying any more here, than that those who do not understand it will not think much of us. But some accusations of weakness or wickedness in Christian hope are hastily or maliciously made, and there are great facilities for insinuating them, which Gibbon and others have brought to an extraordinary perfection. The worst is that they often bear a painful sting of truth, and must almost always compel us to self-defence and explanation. It therefore seems best to repeat the observation, that all descriptions of a mysterious and spiritual state not yet distinctly experienced are by their very nature symbolic, and also personal. We are not answerable for other men's errors, except in as far as we partake in them. That this state exists, and contains certain things described in the Apocalypse and elsewhere, Christians all believe. That we shall exist in it for ever, we hope; but whether its phenomena (so to call them) will present themselves literally as described or not, we do not know. And if some have unwisely or in simplicity taken them over literally, and fallen into grotesque misconceptions, we regret it, but it is not our fault; nor

are their speculations always ridiculous or wrong, though the word 'grotesque' be rightly applicable to them. Holbein's woodcuts are grotesque, but neither ridiculous nor wrong. The Christian imagination of heaven practically means some Christian's imagination of himself in heaven; and he may be better or worse prepared to dwell on such a subject. These kindred points, that all description in this kind is symbolic, all private interpretation conjectural, and all practical meditation personal, lead us to misunderstand each other's expressions, not quite comprehending our own. But our individualities and errors of conception ought not to be described as more foolish than they really are. Nor do we deprive our subject of reality, even though, confessing ourselves incompetent to it and being unable to abstain from it, we go wrong about it. It is so with men's thoughts on many great subjects, physical and spiritual. We are forced to conjecture about things too great for us. People had very incorrect ideas about thunder and lightning in Horace's time; but he was very much afraid of them, and there could be no doubt whatever of their reality. Nor would there be now, if science called them by any other name, reduced them into mathematical formula, or denied their existence.

CHAPTER V.

EXPECTATIONS OF PENAL JUSTICE.

But there is one great and grave misconception of Christian hope, which is based on some lamentable truth, and which cannot be altogether removed, since it leads to the edge of insoluble mysteries. It meets us here, and cannot be evaded. Men tell us, "Your hopes for yourselves are mixed with hope and desire of the eternal misery of your enemies; and your notion of your enemies is a wide one. Your Church has always anathematised and condemned, and very frequently indulged in persecution; and you yourselves, though you profess to forgive your enemies, only hand them on in anticipation to a merciless judgment, from which you can grant them no amnesty. To do you justice, we do not think you want to burn us yourselves on earth, or that you really desire our eternal misery; but neither you nor your faith nor any other can give us relief in this great matter."

Now as far as this kind of language is prompted by genuine distress on the question of eternal punishment, we can only sympathise

with it, and say it is not our fault if we abide by what is written. But if it is meant that the Christian Faith and the promises we claim from it are worth nothing, unless they are stretched to doctrines of universal salvation, we note, first, that Christianity is the only creed under which such ideas as the redemption of all mankind can possibly exist—which is one thing; and then we say there are two classes of texts in Holy Scripture, warnings and promises, and that we shall never in this world be able to see how they are all true together, as they are. We can say that it appears from documents that the Church's imagination was early exercised in solemn and symbolic representations of heaven as described in the Apocalypse, and that for nearly a thousand years hell was not represented, nor perhaps made a subject of Christian meditation. Against this the celebrated passage from Tertullian is produced from the anti-Christian arsenal of Gibbon's fifteenth chapter, and the whole subject and history of Christian persecution is opened. Omitting invective, it is felt that persecution to death for religion implies a belief on the part of the persecutor that obstinate error involves consequences worse than death, and some form of eternal condemnation or the death of the soul. Persecution, it is said, is a legitimate or at least

logical result from the idea of everlasting punishment: therefore, unless you are express in rejecting that, you are logically a persecutor.

On this it must be remarked, that though Christian persecutors by logical afterthought, and non-Christians contemplating their proceedings, connect persecution with the belief in eternal punishment,—so that it has seemed proper to threaten your heretic with the stake to save his soul from Gehenna, and even to burn him if he goes on teaching heresy, to save others from the same;—nevertheless, persecution began without the least reference to eternal punishment. It began in a tumultuary way with Sadducees who believed neither in resurrection nor spirit, and was conducted on no principle except offence against the Jewish law. As to expectations of a future world, do our opponents deliberately charge us with expecting to be happy in eternally persecuting them, or in seeing anybody else do it? An inquisitor, we hope, would not wish to carry on his trade for ever, but to find it at last unnecessary, and his occupation gone. But we must remark, again, that persecution, as far as Christians are concerned with it, is no invention of theirs. It began with the statecraft of Caiaphas; it broke out again for the safety and pleasure of Nero;

it was legally regulated by Trajan, the younger Pliny's zeal having already carried him further than the Emperor desired (he had put two deaconesses to the torture, besides executions[1]); then it rose to attempted extermination, and was renewed again and again till Constantine and the peace of the Church. It was always a thoroughly secular or state proceeding; though the Pagan priesthood everywhere, and as time passed and the Faith became a social or political power, the great hostile pagan interest in Rome, may have set the state in motion from time to time. All depended on the Emperor, the military imperator of the Roman world. To disobey him was high treason; so it was to deny his divinity. Whether the Christian offended the numen or the majestas of Divus Cæsar, he was subject to the extremity of fire and steel if he would not sacrifice. Religious persecution by the Church through the state is unquestionably the inheritance of the Roman empire, just like other features of the Roman law. Its adoption by the Church is laid on Theodosius and Honorius, at least their names are attached to that, as to other consequences of her Mezentian union with the dying empire. Anathema, exclusion from communion, and deprival

[1] Plin. Ep. x. 97, 98.

of church office, had been all the means of coercion the Church avowed. They may or may not have been rashly used. Athanasius declared there was no fellowship between the Catholic Church of Christ and a heresy which was fighting against Him, which certainly involved deprivation of the heretic; and the Arian bishops and emperors had hunted Athanasius like a partridge in the desert[1]. He may have been wrong or imprudent, or may have stretched Church authority; they sought his life as they could without scruple, but their proceedings, with Constantine's and Julian's, were not officially endorsed or legalised either by the Church or Empire. In the Theodosian Code, under A. D. 396–408, we find the coercive edicts of his father, renewed and ratified by Honorius—that is to say, by the advice or not without the authority of St. Ambrose and Stilicho, who is known to have deferred to the great saint of Milan. The latter, as we know, had been a high official of the Empire, and had also tried the strength of the Church against the Empire with success. He and even Stilicho may have conscientiously thought of a spiritual dominion in aid of the imperium and the

[1] Persecution to death, and deprivation of ecclesiastical office, are different things. See St. Athanasius, Apologia de Fuga, viii. and xxiii.; Hist. Arian. xxxiii. and lxix.

legions. They may have thought that if the Church could indeed silence the contending voices within her, and add her unknown forces to the sinking state, the whole life and majesty of Rome might be restored; and that nothing but such an union could enable her to make head against the Dacian and conspiring Danube, and all the hosts of savages pressing on every frontier. Anyhow they allowed imperial coercion to become a feature of the Christian Church, using it chiefly against Paganism, which certainly required helping to its end; and coercion or state compulsion invoked at need generally ripens, and did ripen in the Church, to persecution, or systematic search for occasions of compulsion. From that time the use of the sword of St. Peter, the alliance with the secular arm, European crusades and papal-imperial wars; intense national struggles, the Inquisition, the Armada, the Thirty Years' War; the final perseverance in cruelty of Louis XIV to the eve of the Revolution, followed each other in logical succession, until in fact great part of Europe had turned in despair and defiance from the Faith which seemed such a tremendous engine of destruction. The first capital punishment for religious error was, we presume, the execution of Priscillian and his followers by Maximus,

A.D. 385. One may judge by the earnest protests of St. Martin of Tours, St. Ambrose and others, that such a punishment by the secular arm was a very different thing, and a far more desperate example, than exclusion or deprivation by the Church. It might have been in Ambrose's power, by we know not what protest, to have proclaimed that the Church would in no case strike with the sword. Had he done so, the whole Church would have remembered him for a dictum and precedent which would have been worth more than display and organisation of her power. But it may have been impossible for him to distinguish the Empire as a Christian despotism from its former state as a Pagan system. Could he but have striven with minor offenders as he did with Theodosius, with the spiritual weapon only!

Gibbon's insinuated contention is, that mutual persecution even to death by Christians discredits the Christian Faith even to disproof. Those who think with him are not compelled or invited to read this book. But to others it may be repeated, first, that a belief in everlasting punishment, though perhaps used for self-justification by persecutors, does not necessarily make persecution a part of the Christian system; as the hopeless offender may be left to

the judgment of his Master. Then we have to observe that it is written that all things shall be made new. There may indeed be prepared for us an indescribable blessedness of reconciliation and mutual understanding in Christ. It may be reserved for those who have erred, contended, and been forgiven. If there is to be no more curse, there will certainly be neither heresy nor polemics in that new earth or heaven. The promise of many mansions is not after all to be read to imply that the forgiven and accepted will need forcible or permanent separation for peace sake.

Then we come to the celebrated passage from Tertullian, which is of course to be regretted by those who attach plenary importance to that father's observations. As he died in obstinate heresy, and this treatise De Spectaculis was probably written in heresy, his words may be valued simply on their merits; and in this instance they are those of a madman. Some of the best restrained among us in word or deed may know what it is to be tormented with visionary words of fierce reproach against victorious wrong, which form themselves into speakable sentences which never can be spoken. It was Tertullian's fate to write down everything: adulation had delivered him over to his genius for rhetoric and savage epigram. But there are very con-

siderable allowances to be made for a man who lived between A.D. 160–240. Not the least excuse for his language, for St. Jerome's, and that of other fathers, is the dreadful predominance of rhetoric in the Roman world. Our own generation suffers and will suffer from the incessant darkening of counsel by reckless discussion: but severe science, old habits of chivalric reticence, and mutual criticism, enable us to make some head, if only by way of protest, against mere flux of words. But where the rhetorician combined all the power of press, courts, senate, pulpit, and social influence, as in Roman society from the second century, he was apt to feel himself absolute master of opinion, to give loose to violent temper in every subject he treated, and to feed his own rage by his own ravings. But more than this, Tertullian had been born immediately after the Aurelian persecution. Either at the same time with, or ten years after, the death of Polycarp of Smyrna in 166, came that of Pothinus of Lyons. The philosophic Emperor encouraged popular action in elaborate torture of women. This may account in part for Gibbon's appreciation of the beauties of his character. But as to Tertullian's fearful expressions, we wonder what language may really be considered graceful, dignified, conciliating, or

cultured, or sweetly reasonable to use from the Christian standpoint, when you have seen men and women scourged, staked, and fried alive for worshipping Jesus Christ?[1] It would have been exceedingly difficult for Tertullian to refrain from allusion to the judgment of God, which he most sincerely looked for; and he had known many souls in his days who had joined the company under the altar. That part of St. John's vision need not be taken too literally, and the prayer of the martyrs may only be for deliverance of saints yet on earth. But they do call on God, as Holy and True, to avenge the blood of His saints. We have no excuse for joining in their call, simply because we have not been martyred. But Tertullian was near enough to martyrdom, and suffered all its moral agonies; and what he says about the amphitheatre where virgins and priests were burned and devoured, and its philosophic or tumultuous public, may be palliated as a falsetto of righteous but extreme wrath against extreme wrong.

However, nobody will say that he is the official or representative voice of the Church in this matter. No section of the Church of Christ has ever proclaimed its hope of rejoicing, exulting,

[1] Eusebius, v. 1. Milman, ii. p. 148.

admiring, and all the rest, at the sight of the powers of the earth liquifying in eternal fire. The martyrs died in hope, and the Church on earth lives in hope, that the faithful will be saved; not that any special class of persons will be damned. Men endured the cross and the lions, and fire, and the red-hot seat, because they believed in an unknown heaven for themselves; not because they were at heart devising as curious torments for their murderers. The earlier creeds set forth the life everlasting, and do not set forth the everlasting fire—though no Christian of their day, as far as we know, dared deny it. There is a reticence; and it is certainly observable for centuries of the popular symbolic ornamentation of the Primitive Church. To distinguish this from Mediæval or even Byzantine work should be considered a part of the education of every historic scholar, and certainly of the greater number of clergy; and a leading distinction is, that the earlier cycles of ornamentation and pictorial teaching, for nearly one thousand years, admit no penal imagery. Even the crucifix dates from the sixth century at earliest. In fact, the eternal punishment of Pagans probably was not, as Gibbon insinuates, the habitual meditation of devout poor people in great danger of being burnt *sub dio*. Such

an article was not added to any early creed by acclamation, as a doctrine full of comfort which the faithful desired to believe. The thought of future punishment in some signal form belongs to all religions, and is a corollary of all modern systems. Even Comtism has its judgments of the dead by the living, separate cemeteries of honour and dishonour, and other terrors doubtless formidable to brethren of the cult. There is an indefinite outcry of the human soul for vengeance without limit when it sees no measure of wrong; and when good seems powerless in this world, we call on God to overcome evil with evil, which is not in His eternal purpose.

We have then to repudiate for ourselves and all Christians the idea of exultant anticipation of any other person's eternal punishment. It is not our question here: if it were, we could but repeat certain texts containing the Lord's own language, and say that we cannot see how they can be explained away—or, to us in this life, fully explained at all. But as to having the rage of Tertullian imputed—say to a modern English Bishop as a necessary official tenet—that does not seem very sweet or reasonable. But that is what Gibbon tried to insinuate against all Christians. It is an effective taunt, and like all such things must go for more

than it is worth. We are not bound to justify ways of God which He has not fully committed to us. This subject is beyond thought or expression. On many such matters the Church of England has been accused of uttering an uncertain sound. To us it seems that her children are happy because she retains the right of silence on things unspeakable.

We shall have to return to this subject in considering the hopes of Mediæval and Renaissance Christianity. For the present it is enough to say that our own are quite untinged with past or prospective malice against the soul of any person for whom Christ died. It should not be imputed to them.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCEPTIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS OF REST.

No one can dispense with the term Rest in the endeavour to give account either of Christian or any other hopes of happiness in another world. There the wicked (whoever they are) cease from troubling, and the weary (all who have borne the burden of life) are at rest. Cessation from troubling is of course a negative idea; but when we come to the rest of the weary, some conscious and positive happiness seems to be included in it; and it seems that Christian and Atheistic views on the subject are like with a difference—as often happens. We often hear a popular call for rest in death. All the world last year read an essay called "The Midway Inn," by a deservedly successful writer, which gave a capital description of brute scepticism, ignorant of facts, or thoughts, or dogmas, or creeds, or anything; unable to desist from idle speculation, and too indolent and self-satisfied for vigorous enquiry or accurate thought. It was the speculation of smoking-rooms and pot-

houses, formidable in conversation from ready and peremptory knowledge of what a number of similar men say—from a vulgar kind of "esprit de tout le monde." Mr. Payn's middle-aged middle-class cynic is disinclined to believe in heaven, because man at the end of life is often a sort of worn-out slave, who had rather be let alone, and would prefer Rest to any Heavenly City.

For the Heavenly City, we shall have something to say on that expression presently. But if a man will consider himself a slave—and a mutinous one—in this world, we are unable (among other things we cannot do for him) to hold him out any prospect of final unconsciousness, or of escape from the presence of a Master—not if he fly up to heaven, or go down to hell, or take the wings of the morning. We think that it is possible and far better to think of a Lord of all men who giveth His beloved sleep. But it is interesting to observe, in the overbearing narrowness of the English Philistine, the same fallacy which turns up in the melodious blasphemies of the æsthetic Left, or semi-satanic school of literature. They too call for rest, exactly as their French or German originals expect annihilation: and the cry is well adapted to the purposes of the modern novel.

Both agree that there is no God or heaven, but that rest and an end of toil are things to be desired: it is the basis of all hope whatever. But they all seem to want a kind of consciousness in annihilation; which strikes us as a singular outlook. They talk about absorption, the life of trees and stones and rain, sleep that knows no waking, and all that; and do all they can to retain the fancy of a pleasant sense of nothingness, triumphing in the supposition that heaven can do nothing with them. There is a malicious moribund (in Middlemarch, by George Eliot, we rather think) who gives directions for his own funeral, to the prospective confusion of attendant relatives and expectants, as if he would certainly be able to see their faces, and how they liked it; and we think all anticipations of an atheistic Nirwana equally fallacious.

The vulgar make themselves a heaven like their own chief enjoyments; and this is, in fact, a hope of looking on for ever at mischief, far out of its way. But we don't know what authority there is for it. Shelley's desire to lie down for ever like a tired child is a little complicated with what is called in children naughtiness, or a determination to beat the authorities even at the risk of being sent to bed. But what we expect (and we know not what it shall be) is

rest in the Lord; not without Him. By the word 'rest,' we mean deliverance from evil, plus retained identity and consciousness of Him. It is a negative blessing, as the elimination of poison from the physical system is one. We use the word much, for there is much affliction here. Dante and other poets and painters have conceived of an intermediate pause or quiet after death, in which the forgiven soul may remain in peace and hope, in self-collection and prayer, before its assured though postponed progress heavenward: and, as was said before, it has been exquisitely well worked out by Dr. Newman. For this or any other detail, we have no authority. The special meaning of the word 'rest,' for the individual, will vary with his troubles: but God in Christ invites him to come, and find rest for his soul, as His gift. Death is not the giver, but the Lord of life and death. Those who expect annihilation as a blessing, because they are utterly at variance with the world, will find it necessary to invent some mediate state of existence, in which they can be conscious of unconsciousness as a blessing, and unite the alternatives of to be and not to be.

Deliverance from personal sin and the power of evil, within and without; from all tendencies

and impulses that way; from the possibility of temptation, and the treacherous will that seeks it; from every terrifying or coercing detail of circumstance; from dragging weight of example or evil teaching; and from the sight of all this and its effects on other men and on the world;—all this is but one division of the many meanings of this word *rest* in its spiritual use. The rest promised and given is that of the spirit which has long sought in sorrow, and has attained infinity in all objects of its search. And before quitting this part of our subject, we may appeal to a feeling, which we think is only realised late in life by strong and active people (though earlier, if less thoughtfully, by weaker and less energetic spirits)—the desire of peace or pause in the restless endeavours of the spirit. We do not mean its endeavours after unworthy or evil objects; we mean the unavoidable and continual call for something to work at and to think of to the end—something to be rightly interested in, something to which the fragments that remain of a hard-worn and shattered life may yet be given. Not that we ask for any great effect; this we have probably ceased to look for: but to be left in the world with a still active mind and temper, full of vague energy without an object, is in fact a grievous

trial of many men's latter days; and it exposes them to temptation at a time when they might hope to be almost entirely set free. Its visible and physical ill effects are the cause of endless complaint in this country, and we may be thankful that they are no worse. Still, it may be said of a reputation as of a lifetime, that it is never happy till its end is come in this world. It is no use repeating old sayings on any subject; but none is more futile, just now, than that which points out that a time may come when one can no more fight or give counsel. Then, it says, let the old man pray, or give himself to prayer—and it may at all events be better to do so than to continue to the end encumbering action, darkening counsel, neutralising effort, and blocking improvement. At all events, there is a certain magnanimity, born of faith, in the character which can understand its near approach to the judgment of God; and understand, like Israel, that all the honour and adornment of man's life must go from him before his sentence is determined. "Lay aside thine ornaments, that I may know what to do with thee"—turn from rhetoric and the strife of tongues, give up the struggle for victory, competition, publicity; leave your place in the thoughts of men who think not too wisely,

realise your place and your state in the eye of Infinite Wisdom. Some such concession as this must be at least a contemplated possibility in the minds of those who would anticipate the idea of a spiritual and heavenly rest.

Byron probably knew well what he meant when he wrote that quiet to quick bosoms is a hell. Every hour consists of sixty minutes, and every minute is quite long enough for an expansion of happiness or a pang of the contrary feeling. So that it is not by any means the worst of mankind who are most conscious of a certain impatient endurance of the very lapse of time. Those who have spent many hours in happy labour, feeling perhaps hour by hour some good thing done or gained; those who have tasted of well-doing, and have really worked for others with effect, the brave who have dared, the patient who have had victory in endurance, the faithful who have been true, even to their own sacrifice or hindrance—all these have had their signal moments of life, and so have all who have striven for any sane or honourable ideal. Their thoughts gather round these central times, when they were graced with victory—they are thankful, but they desire more. Even the devout long to dedicate every hour of life; and practical and every-day thinkers

and workers, in the way of religion as in everything else, appeal to the dial and its hours, and brandish appalling time-tables to the horror of the few conscientious young people of the present day who will vouchsafe them the least particle of attention. All this competition for well-doing is good; but after all it is a struggle of the days of our vanity, and the best of us also are wearied with very vanity. Better that, no doubt, than fall aside to sinful pleasure or thankless neglect of talents given. But the time may come when there shall be no sinful pleasure to lead aside, and no pains of other men to alleviate, and no necessities of earth whereto to minister. The word 'rest' points to something which shall fill up the void of work and ministry no more needed, and give the soul fulness of joy, instead of the now worthy, and needful employments of earth. This must be partly considered in our next chapter, which refers to a heaven of praise as the delightful and sufficient employment of redeemed and delivered souls.

Suppose rest to be a condition of spiritual peace or enjoyment without effort, as of a divine atmosphere pervading life. Suppose it to be a sustained condition of contemplation, not intellectual only or chiefly, but penetrated by love,

and having knowledge through love. Suppose it be a continual delight in a gift, and in grace given, all gratitude without uneasy sense of effort. Surely it would then correspond to the knowledge of Christ, and to the peace which passeth understanding.

Those who have made spiritual happiness a study of life—those who expect it or look for it at all—may be a larger or smaller minority at the present time, or they may not be in a minority, as a matter of fact. But the universal call for rest is generally admitted as the expression of a genuine feeling. We Christians say, rest is with God or in Him; "Cor nostrum requiescet in Te." Nobody says it is with Satan or Mephistophiles, not even those who use the language of denial on earth. If it be nowhere, it is nothing. But there is no sane alternative between the hope of annihilation, if it is to be called a hope, and the hope of rest with Christ in God. People treat logic as it treats them, and nothing is easier than to reject an accurate conclusion. But correct logic, whatever it may be worth, does force this conclusion on every one who believes in his own soul or real existence, and desires a full and final peace for its consummation.

CHAPTER VII.

OBJECTIONS TO A HEAVEN OF PRAISE, AND OTHER MISCONCEPTIONS.

An age of unlimited competition, of secular education on competitive principles, and of mutual disrespect in all its forms, is likely to develope a certain insensibility to spiritual things, which in different circles will be called by different names. Those who partake in it will call it realism or reality, or perhaps positivism; and say it is the right or only standard of things: others will call it simply vulgarity, or insensibility (more or less wilful) to the true nature and relations of things. And we find that insensibility, or want of understanding, displays itself in religious matters, as in other things, by unspeakable vulgarity of conception and expression. In fact, mere ignorance or hardness is not enough without self-satisfaction and overbearing self-assertion. Ignorant fanaticism seems to expose itself by a kind of fatality to the contempt of ignorant denial. Christian faith is often associated with grievous crudity of thought, and suffers from the same impotence

of right conception as vulgar unbelief. The fanatic cannot and the agnostic will not conceive of things except as he has seen them. One thinks he will use his familiar hymn-book in Heaven, the other laughs at him for believing that such a state can exist, when his notions of it are so ridiculous.

Now, popular conceptions may be erroneous, though sincere; they may even be grotesquely wrong, through poverty of idea or of language: and we know not how this can be helped; but meanwhile they should be borne with by all believers. At the same time there are many educated persons whose judgment deserves attention, and whose devotion is not diminished by culture: and they suffer a good deal on both hands from outrage to their taste, or their instinctive judgment on the fitness of things. What we call good taste may not be one of the higher gifts of the Spirit: and where they are present they may supersede it, or take its place with something better. But we shall see, also, that unspirituality is a cause of anthropomorphism: and that that in its turn produces an amount of bad taste which may place sincerely though narrowly religious persons in a far more uninviting light than they deserve.

Vulgarity seems less formidable where there

has been no neglect of opportunities of better teaching; as its insensibility is always connected with wilful self-assertion. It has much to do with dull narrow life, with consequent coarseness; in particular, with falsehood and low cunning stupidly enjoyed and extolled; with sudden changes of fortune which raise men into untried positions; with ostentation and display which involve them in falsehood or insolence; with eager contention for mean objects, ignoring higher; with general insensibility to true standards and objects, and suspicion of those who set them up. We have no wish to provoke anybody: all we say is, that narrow earnestness in religion, and no religion at all, are both alike subject to misconceptions, especially about the Apocalypse, or Christian notions derived therefrom; and that we wish to make some effort by explanation to contend with the disastrous consequences of mutual misunderstandings, which expose us to the risk of being thought falser and more foolish persons than we really are.

The difficulties of full self-expression to a person who cannot feel with, and therefore will not believe you, are very great; and they seem to exist in their worst form between the clergy and the literary profession. The latter describe themselves as "alienated from Christianity,"

and exhaust innuendo in imputing the fact to the former. The real reason is that the clergy compete for public attention, and have a subject of their own to proclaim which they think more important than fiction or party history. The writer of this book could hardly expect a regular novelist or journalist either to like to read it himself, or to wish any other person to do so. Men write for a livelihood, and in consequence they are quite occupied with self-expression on any subject which will procure them a hearing. They are naturally alienated from a class of men who proclaim one subject, kept in their own hands for the most part, as infinitely more important than any other, as clergy are bound to do. They hardly face the fact, that the public really wants to hear about religious matters, and the great spiritual interests of life; they cannot enter into Christian thoughts about Heaven, or allow for the admitted and unquestionable weakness of those who strive with conceptions of it.

In fact, literature promulgates misconceptions of what we really do expect, in several ways. We have noticed the first. Then there is natural exclamation against final retribution; and the implied accusation follows, that the Christian Church desires or looks triumphantly for the

condemnation of the majority of mankind. This branches off into reflections, anti-catholic or anti-puritan as the case may be, on the common want of Christian charity: or again it goes off into popular sentiments about the rich man's going to heaven, and the poor man's being damned by circumstance; which is of course represented as the Church's hope. Then there is the more ingenious and subtle implication, by caricatured description and misunderstood or really absurd quotation, that Christian anticipations of Heaven are so low, so feeble, so dull and childish, so adapted to the taste of the poor and needy, so unintelligible to the believer, and so incredible to the able man, so altogether inadequate, as to furnish no data worth pursuing. The subject seems worthless to a man full of words or affairs. "To the able man," said Goethe, "the world is not dumb: why should he go off in search of another?" This quiet assumption not only that little is known, but that nothing is worth knowing, about a future state, is obviously reason enough for literature to let it alone. And *if it only would do so*, we should not complain here: but it will caricature our hopes by way of invalidating our testimony.

Now, there is the coarse continual sneer about an eternal service of thanksgiving, or an endless

celebration of the sacrifice of our redemption. It should be considered that there is enormous difficulty in contemplating an eternal anything: but let us endeavour to get over that, as far as we can, for argument's sake. The idea of an eternal service of glory means what is described in the Apocalypse as such. Suppose we take one or two different opinions on that subject. John Bunyan was a Puritan and a tinker; so the Wildrake type of cavaliers probably called him in his day; and so, with a little circumlocution, Culture dismisses him now: perhaps it can best sympathise with Philistinism in joint contempt for him and his celestial city. Both will have to acknowledge that he was a man whose poetic power of conception and expression was only second to Milton's in his own time. His view of this matter may fairly be contrasted with that of any of our leading æsthetes or Hellenists; and their notions of a spiritual state of joy will be found to differ exceedingly. The ordinary symbolism of the Apocalypse gives a great and undefined uplifting satisfaction to one man, and the other thinks it simply a mistake. At the end of the Pilgrim's Progress the dreamer sees the heavenly city; and there are in it many men walking with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands,

and with golden harps to sing praises withal. And when I had seen it, he says, "I wished myself among them." So do we, in the simplest but most decisive sense, whenever we open the book. But this is exactly what the neo-Hellenist does not wish. We are made to understand in "Culture and Anarchy," p. 146, that it is all a mistake; but certainly, like other such errors, it will be repeated to the end of time. On the other hand, we have given us in the charming book just referred to, "the true Greek notion of happiness, as conveyed in the words of a great French moralist, 'C'est le bonheur des hommes.' When? when they abhor that which is evil? No. When they exercise themselves in the law of the Lord day and night? No. When they die daily? No. When they walk about the New Jerusalem with palms in their hands? No: but when their thought hits 'quand ils pensent juste.'"

These two views curiously illustrate the scholarship of the Renaissance and the religion of the Reformation. It would comfort many admiring readers if our elegant author could bear with that large number of men who are so constituted as to wish earnestly with Bunyan.

We own we do not know who the great French moralist is, nor what he means. Of

course to think right is the greatest gift in this world, if you think right on great matters, as of the spiritual life. Correctness on minor matters is a minor blessing.

If he means that the greatest happiness here and hereafter is produced by saying neat things, it depends a good deal on who says them. The language of modern culture often has a good deal more light than sweetness in it, and we do not think that reading æsthetic literature for ever and ever would quite make up for deprivation of the things unspeakable. From our point of view, this is a very curious example of how little intellectual culture really has to do with elevation of spirit, or higher hope, or any thoughts above review-pitch; and how little it determines what is worth thinking or thinking about. The word 'unspeakable' is in itself a crucial distinction between the two habits of mind, Christian and Neo-Greek. One muses gladly on things past expression in the inner or outer λόγος, as none the less realities; the other simply declares them unthinkable, and laughs at the mystic. Can anything exist except as food for epigram? and is not he a mystic who believes in mysteries?

Tauler went by that name for that reason. But to return to the bugbear of perpetual ser-

vice of praise. It is less formidable, we may observe, to those who are accustomed to go to church on earth than to those who are not. The former, like their critics, know too well what it is to be tired and wandering during divine service; but they think that in heaven they will have the service without the weariness, and that makes all the difference. It always was a disparagement to the Kingdom of Heaven that so many low uneducated people were asked into it. It is announced that even a majority of its inheritors are on the whole poor sort of people; at least to be poor in heart is one of their qualifications; and it is probably made one of them, because it admits gratitude and love for favours received. This, in the modern view, is poverty of spirit in a degrading sense. Charity and almsgiving are disparaged for producing it; the poor man is not to be helped, but taught to assert his rights, i. e. to help himself to somebody else's property. Now we are told that the poor in spirit are blessed even here, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven; and of course it is not a pleasant prospect to highly educated persons to meet, there or anywhere, a number of ill-informed people, all very glad of being saved from what the cultured ones do not believe in, and all wanting to sing hymns about

it. Æsthetic teas and intense symposia seem much nicer, or it may come to be a question between æsthetic teas and school teas. No doubt, as our author says, "great surprises are certainly reserved" for us all; and as he seems to have a great dislike to psalmody, and to have formed a low opinion of Evangelical Christianity from its use of one or two hymns (whose weakness of expression we much regret); as, moreover, we began this book by notice of anticipations derivable from the higher pleasures of sight—we may here correct or qualify that apparently crude and unspiritual distaste for a future state of praise, which seems to amount to misplaced and anthropomorphic alarm about hearing too much music, and being kept to psalm-singing.

We can hardly consider it a bodily or spiritual perfection to be insensible to music here. Study and practice modify taste, of course; a highly instructed person will not be so fond of mere melody as a neophyte, and so on: but it is only because his ear is subtle enough to hear a new melody in harmony and scientific combination of beautiful sounds. But such a person will not despise melody for neophytes, nor underrate the value of broad simple effects for simple people. Music does, in fact, appeal to the nerves and brain of sensitive persons, though they may

not understand it. The study of colour and drawing may cultivate nervous faculties which greatly increase the painter's appreciation of music, whether he is skilled in it or not. We do not know a note of music ourselves, and like melody best; but we do love that dearly in all forms: and in Wagner's music it is impossible not to recognise a spiritual power, into which one would be glad to enter, and the farther the better. That may not be possible for many in this world. But it is far from absurd to imagine a state of the spirit—a spiritual body it is called in Holy Scripture—one of whose conditions should be, let us say, indefinitely great nerve-power and sensibility; that might be susceptible of impressions like those of harmonious sound, and fully protected at the same time from contrary impressions. There is nothing childish or ridiculous in the soul's delight in harmony, unless (as Culture talking materialism is apt to do) you deny or ignore both soul and harmony. I do not see anything absurd in the idea of psalmody for ever and ever in heaven, when once you are there. You may be full of joy and praise for ever; it may bathe and pervade your whole being; it may be to you an eternal fountain to an eternal thirst. To be with a countless multitude with-

out the tumult or oppressions of a multitude in the body; with a multitude of rejoicing spirits, where there is no more sorrow, or curse, or care, and to have them all in perfect sympathy with you, all drawn to one great centre, and that centre the Beatific Vision, is a conceivable condition. Their general sympathy and concentration may be in part expressed by something like what we here call music and psalmody. It may be only analogous, or relatively like. The tune will not be *like* Wagner, the words will not be *like* Watts. And correctly speaking, the whole misapprehension of our thoughts and expectations of the future heaven, as well as of our thoughts concerning the ever-present God, depends on this distinction between actual likeness and analogy, or resemblance of relation[1].

This may come later: but while we are on the subject, it must be observed that the whole subject of the future spiritual state has been confused and obscured in the popular conception, and in fact has been disgraced and caricatured in keener and abler minds, by false realisations and anthropomorphisms, for which the art of

[1] A right and left leg are like each other: a wooden leg is an analogous support to the body, but does not resemble flesh and blood.

painting, and Rafael at the head of it, has a great deal to answer. He and the painters may defend themselves well enough; nor is he the first who painted angels playing on fiddles. Brother John of Fiesole makes them play on concertinas and trombones, or other wind instruments, happily to us unknown. It is quite as intellectually absurd as English hymns; but he makes them look angelical for all that. Nevertheless his trumpeting and fiddling angels are anthropomorphisms, though harmless—like other conceptions of his which we shall have to notice. But we think it decidedly inconsistent for æsthetes of the Renaissance, who condone violins in heaven, as painted by Rafael and Bellini, to object to harps; and still more so to psalms. We are told of the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, of the great voice of much people in heaven, saying Alleluia, of the new song which none could learn except the undefiled, and of the harps of God[1]. So it is, that neither the language in which these descriptions come to us, nor the ideas which they awaken, nor the prospect of a personal share in their future realisation, seem to us ridiculous or disagreeable; and therefore jokes about psalm-

[1] Rev. xiv. 1–4; xv. 3; xix. 1.

singing, however graceful, appear irrelevant from our stand-point.

In reading some of the descriptions of sight and sound, or what St. John says he saw and heard, in the spirit or spiritual world, we are led, as has been seen above, to compare them with the human imagination, and its premature attempts to realise, without special apocalypse or revelation. And there appears to be this great difference in the first place, that the apostle seems always to struggle with the remembrance of a true vision of things unspeakable, with images of exceeding power and vividness, which have been shown him, and for which human words were not made. What he has truly seen is beyond adequate expression. Such expressions as the poet's dream and the painter's vision are used, and both of them are called inspired, by analogy; there *is* a resemblance and relation between the highest working of the human imagination on believed truth, and the direct operation of the Holy Spirit through the whole human soul and spirit. But Rafael or Tintoret never said or thought, in their highest flight of imagination, that they actually saw their subjects, beyond themselves and in the spirit, before they painted them; and St. John says what he saw. He writes down what he

heard from dictation and at command. He has not invented it like a book or work of art; he has not only "seen it within his head," but as a vision from without. His language confesses its inadequacy; he has heard "as it were" the trumpets and harps of heaven. Of course we are like the painters, our realising imagination will have some sort of instrument of wood or brass, Jewish or Roman trumpets, Greek or Egyptian harps. I suppose anybody who should do an Apocalyptic cartoon for St. Paul's decorations at this day would do well to paint Egyptian harps, because he must paint them, to convey the notion of their sound; and St. John probably thought of a harp as a thing of that form, and would have wanted it if he had commanded the picture. I do not know that it would be wrong to represent Erard's patent, as Angelico would have done if he had seen and heard one. But St. John heard "as it were" the sound of harpers; he does not say he saw them, but that he heard. And there is this observation to be made on the two instruments he names, that they represent two great effects of noble sound; its commanding and dictatorial power, and its unspeakable thrill through mortal nerves and brain. The first summons of the Spirit is "as it were a trumpet talking" to St. John; an awful

and piercing tone, so to speak, audible to him in Patmos; and on hearing it he passes out of the human senses, and space, and time, and conditions of the earth. Keats noted in after time how the earnest trumpet spake: and all persons not absolutely senseless have experienced the extraordinary power of harp-strings in particular, and their intense effect on nerves, how their sound seems to thrill through all one's particles, as a note arranges and rearranges sand in patterns on a vibrating tone-plate. There may be secret powers of sound over spiritualised nerve, delightful enough to be a joy for ever. Besides, the act of singing perfect notes, in alternation or harmony with other perfect sounds, is one of such keen delight here, as to be almost overpowering to the high-strung singer; and it may be symbolic of a higher combination of sympathy and harmony. There must be a certain anthropomorphism in any account of spiritual things which is to be understood of man; only he is not, on the peril of his instructor and himself, to be led by it to think he can understand more of the Father of spirits than is here possible for him. This is the secret of symbolic idolatry; it professes to make worship easier by interposing the image. It was easier for Greeks of Attica to think of Athene

and Zeus in ivory and gold; and the glorious idolatry of Pheidias was the result. Only in a century it came to Praxiteles and Aphrodite. It seemed advisable to let Primitive Christianity tamper with representations of saints as well as of her Lord—only no rule or stay could be put upon the people's love of what they could see and handle, and all modern iconolatry has followed, from the Madonna della Seggiuola to the Black Virgin of Ypres.

Now we beg to call attention to this, that St. John's Apocalypse contains no iconolatry. It seeks to convey images of things not strictly describable. It does not describe hierarchies of visible saints, as Tintoret paints them circle on circle in his Paradise. It is a record of actual symbolic vision. St. John has seen an authentic semblance of things which shall be. What he is enabled to tell, of what he was enabled to see, in the spirit, that he tells. It is at least incorrect to bind him or his readers down to literal expectations they do not hold; and then laugh at them and all the Christian Faith, as if they and it were all nonsense together. We seem by this time to have done with wrong impressions of Christian hopes as to a heaven of psalmody in particular, and may go on to other features of the symbolic descrip-

tions of St. John's Apocalypse, which are concerned more with visual impression, and also exposed to unsympathetic interpretation.

Our conjectures of infinite happiness must be at present formed from human happiness. We can only see that in our own personal mirror, and it may be hard to realise what the praises of heaven may be to each of the infinite host who join in them. Praise may conceivably be perfect joy to us; we shall not want to review it or analyse it, or want anything but it. And those who have allowed natural growth to their inborn powers of sympathy, not by way of sensation, but simply by seeking God with their neighbour, may find new sources of happiness and love—nay, experience some new fusion in mutual regard, through the multitudinous praise of all saints. Our loftiest speculations about ourselves may point to some partial divestment of personality, not only in the one mind of joy and praise, but in the loss of all distinguishing marks of sin and sorrow; in an absorption by which all our will may be swept on for ever in exact accordance with the Divine will. Something like this seems to be implied in virtual annihilation of evil will and wayward choice from our moral being; as of doubt and pride from the intellectual. But our notions here of

the restored state must be formed from our notions of the restored soul, and those must always depend greatly upon what we think our own souls may be restored to. And most of us will feel it a process of restoration to lose in great part the mournful record of their present memory.

Perhaps we know each other here by our frailties, in great measure. But how much better shall we know each other, when we see the enduring spirit, the everlasting essence of character, the man as God will have him. This is to see as we are, to know as we are known: and for the redeemed and forgiven, it seems to be something like an infinite happiness.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM AND INDIVIDUALITY.

THERE is a text of Holy Scripture[1] containing something like apostolic comment on prophetic utterance, which has been referred to before, though not quoted in this book: and it may seem altogether unfavourable to the purpose of the book to some readers, to those in fact who will not take it with its context. It carries with it a strong caution against anthropomorphic conjectures of heaven, while it admits that a certain considerable spiritual forecast of things prepared for God's servants is attainable by them here. As we cannot think at all without the use of material images, we must employ them when we think about the spiritual world. Thus it is that Holy Scripture allows us the use of terms about God by analogy, which are not meant to convey ideas of actuality; human qualities are attributed to Him—we hear of His hand and eye, of His anger, repentance, and the like. This same distinction has always been made by thoughtful people, who have often differed

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10; Isa. lxiv. 4.

in its terms, as did the late Dr. Mansel and the Rev. F. D. Maurice. It will, however, be found in Dante (Par. iv. 43), who probably came by it in the course of his wide patristic studies[1]. But it applies to all spiritual things, and has in fact been of equal importance from that day to this. As has been remarked before, it gives grave reason for caution—to Christians in their thoughts of a future state, and to critics of Christian hope and aspiration in their estimates or descriptions of those habits. This was touched on in the last chapter; and before we pursue the subject, a few words on anthropomorphism, or too confident and detailed conjecture of the things of God from the things of this world, seem advisable here.

It is necessary to consider, if we wish to understand what Christian people of our own age really think about heaven, that all human impressions and expressions about it are, first, somebody's expressions, and subjective; secondly, symbolical or conjectural. We can at best but form conjectures; and as there is no common ground of experience, our individual imagination pictures our conjectures before our own mind's eye in a way we cannot convey with

[1] As in Augustine's language as to the Image of God, De Genesi contra Manichæos, xvii. (See last chapter.)

absolute accuracy to anybody else's mind's eye. All we say, then, must be tentative and not literal, especially when we read or interpret the Apocalypse. It is the vision of St. John written in a book; a record of things seen in the spirit, and not as man seeth. The vision is true but not literal; the facts are real, not actual like earthly things. They are, in fact, unspeakable by the outer (or *proforic*) Word of expression; and they are indefinable by the inner (*endiathetic*) Word of thought. They are free by hypothesis from conditions of time and space, which limit human conception. All of us must constantly accept the symbolic for the actual; as, when we cannot see a thing we put up willingly enough with the idea of it. We have never seen a murder, or a martyrdom, nor ninety-odd millions of miles; but we believe newspapers, history, and astronomers; and take the facts as valid facts, truths of the past or present.

Now the human imagination, under certain circumstances of excitement, acts with a strange and arbitrary power of its own, depending less on education and more on what we correctly call gift, than any other faculty. People may despise, or differ as to the value of its results that cannot be helped; but there can be no doubt that they are something; and with those

who believe in inspiration, they bear its name. They pass with wonderful vigour through different minds. Perhaps the simplest-minded person who ever read of the holy city coming down from heaven adorned as a bride, may have as good a notion of descending glory making all things new as the most learned of latter-day Gnostics; that is to say, if (whatever the words mean) he really wants to see or inhabit the holy city some day himself. Of course, if he takes the Gnostic view of happiness and of it, he will not want to see it. Still, it is certain, though it may be contemptible, that men of some originality and acquired intelligence and experience of life still exist, who feel exactly like Bunyan when they read about the holy city. That vision is their vision also. There is a picture of its descent from heaven (in Marlborough College Chapel, by Mr. Spencer Stanhope) which I should call one of the most beautiful and original things in art; a new realisation of Christian imagination to all time—while the canvas and paint last. And going up through Ary Scheffer's Christus Consolator, Durer's Adoration of the Cross[1], Tintoret's Para-

[1] At Vienna: a great scene in mid-air—a heaven with all Angelico's carnation and gold, and an earth and sea outspread below, exactly like Turner.

dise, and Raffaelle's more academic visions—passing by Perugino to Dante, Angelico, Giotto, and the elders, we do find that a number of men of capacity have devoted much time to this subject, and that they have done so as if they believed in it. They have not, perhaps, taken it in the sense in which they are sometimes asserted to take it—that there will be literally a city of gold and silver hauled up and down in the air like the Isle of Laputa, and that there will be nothing to do in it but to walk about with a palm in one's hand, as if one was staying at Nice. They have thought that there is a state or condition of the restored souls in blessedness, praise, and glory, which is the reflex of divine glory: not local as we think of space, or golden as we think of gold. If this imagination is against the canons of Culture, so much the worse for it or them: but pooh-poohing it is all nonsense. It would and it may doubtless be a feature of heavenly happiness to have right thoughts on all things: but the expression *penser juste* seems to us to mean no more than thinking and speaking in an accurate and epigrammatic way on literary or speculative matters; and we do not think much more of an epigrammatic heaven than of a hunter's paradise, or of Angelico's dance in green fields.

Right thinking on spiritual matters involves confession of weakness, which prevents our speaking on them with scientific accuracy, or pungent neatness.

Still the fact is that conjecture from the capacities of the two great senses of sight and hearing is quite legitimate. The great argument from beauty of sound and sight, to the originating cause and contriver, has been lately set forth. There is such mysterious joy in these beauties here that there may be a transcendental state of joy in them hereafter. So also as we conjecture of heaven through the beatitudes, we may conjecture of it through faculties and characteristics of human nature—that is to say, practically, of our own nature. A colourist's delight in colour is a harmless human emotion, let us say; but it is certainly given us to suppose as a possibility that he may have it intensified in the spirit; and, as we shall see, it is appealed to in the Apocalypse. A musician's sense of perfect sound may make him unfit for the duties of a churchwarden or a civil engineer in this world; but he may have reason to suppose that it will entirely and for ever transport him in the world to come: for so it is written.

Then, as to the author of the Apocalypse. He does not assert that there is anywhere in

the heavens an actual city of gold and pearl; but that he saw a vision of a city best described by those words with others. He does not say that the gold and the jewels are an important element in the happiness of the inhabitants; or that they want buildings to live in or walls to defend them at all. He did not want the Seven Churches to think of pavements of trodden gold in the spirit of Milton's Mammon, the least-erected spirit who fell. When he tells of jewel-foundations, and wrought gold like to glass, he is simply exhausting the language spoken by a Græco-Syrian to express beauty, and preciousness and splendour of colour, which are one of its chief characteristics to the oriental mind. He wants to express the highest excitement and purest pleasure of what we here call eyesight. And the fact that he has succeeded in conveying ideas of great intensity and vivacity, about a thing past knowledge, to so many generations of men without knowledge, is to us a proof that he spoke by the Holy Spirit of God for the instruction of man. We think we are promised a spiritual body—an analogous organisation to that which we now inhabit. Why should not its etherealised senses be capable of enjoying colour and sound in some purest or archetypal

nature[1]? Those who will read Ezekiel i., and compare it with descriptions in the Apocalypse, will see that jewels, &c., conveying ideas of the purest possible colour, may be used as symbolic exponents of the highest delights of preternatural vision. If all knowledge be acquired through the senses, still a heaven of boundless knowledge has always been considered a sound and dignified conception. The sight and hearing which acquire knowledge may be transfigured into features of an infinite delight, which may be ours.

Dr. Mozley's Sermon on Nature lays stress, as he may well do, on the final suggestion of the Beatific Vision as the all-sufficient fruition of eternal happiness. It is a great sight, speaking by analogy, which is promised to the redeemed and glorified of all the earth. "The scattered rays of pictorial representation[2], which only occasionally pierce through the clouds of the Old Testament, are gathered into one focus in the New. The great cloud and the fire infolding itself, the hues of amber and burnished brass, sapphire and lightning, and the colour of

[1] "Colour and form exist in eternal unchangeable beauty; and are for continual contemplation, which is Art." Prof. Poynter, Popular Lectures, p. 65.

[2] University Sermons, p. 155.

the terrible crystal, the mingled partly recognisable forms of glory, the appearance of brightness as the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain—upon the likeness of the throne, the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it—'this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.' And this sight, with the Apocalyptic descriptions, converge into an ineffable, eternal appearance, in which God will ever be seen as He is, and they issue in the doctrine of the Visio Dei. . . . And thus heaven specially appears in Scripture as the sphere of perfected sight; where the faculty is raised and exalted to its highest act, and the happiness of existence culminates in vision."

The observation follows, that human spirits may be considered as personally glorified by being spectators of glory. Beholding majesty is their own exaltation, and adoration their ascent. "Thine eye shall see the King in His beauty: thou shalt behold the land that is very far off." That we rise by adoration does look like a natural principle. "No one was ever struck with wonder and admiration . . . no one was ever impressed strongly by the beauty and majesty of the visible creation, without at the

same time feeling an accession of rank and elevation to himself from the fact." To have seen something evidently in the very nature of it, and as God made it, *worth seeing*, brings with it hope and upraised heart at least. It has already fallen to the present writer to compare various dicta of the two very different minds of Dr. Mozley and Prof. Ruskin; but in this great point of natural theology they markedly converge, and in it they signally agree—that God leaves not Himself without witness in physics, or yet in psychology, but appoints their contemplation as a way of temporal happiness, symbolic of future hopes for all mankind here. It is curious to observe how the intuitions of the poet-painter, happily developed and supported by education, coincide with the gradual result of the theologian: and the importance of the former is greatly increased by the thought that he has a true vision of possible happiness for all, of a training in things beautiful, and independent sources of natural, simple, and sincere delight, which shall be open to all here, shall invite all to enter in. What on this earth can be so much wanted as a way of unbought pleasure universal and elevating to all, hopeful and spiritual to all who accept the great hopes of their own spirits?

"Instead of supposing the love of nature necessarily connected with the faithlessness of the age, I believe it is connected properly with the benevolence and liberty of the age; that it is precisely the most healthy element which distinctively belongs to us; and that out of it, cultivated no longer in levity or ignorance, but in earnestness, and as a duty, results will spring ... and lights arise, which, for the first time in man's history, will reveal to him the true nature of his life, the true field of his energies, and the true relations between him and his Maker. ... I do believe the world will come, finally, to understand that God paints the clouds, and shapes the moss-fibres; that men may be happy in seeing Him at His work; and that in resting quietly beside Him, in watching His working, and—according to the power He has communicated to ourselves, and the guidance He grants—in carrying out His purposes of peace and charity among all His creatures, are the only real happinesses that ever were, or will be, possible to mankind.[1]"

This is a view of possible happiness in this world, and it includes of course the duty and comfort of active labour for peace and the general welfare: but its chief application to our

[1] Modern Painters, vol. iii. p. 308, Pt. IV, xvii.

subject has gone before, in reference to two chief passages of Scripture, Job xxxviii.–xli. inclusive, and the Sermon on the Mount. The first directs a mind which is to be perfected to humble observance of the works of God in nature; the other contains the things which Christ would have all men first understand. All their language bids men see, behold, consider. They inculcate the view of nature which is taken by the uninvestigating affection of a humble but powerful mind. They do not inculcate analysis, or bid men dissect the muscles of the horse, the fibres of the lily, or the pinions of the raven. No argument from design or contrivance was yet formulated, though men believed that God had prepared the earth for the children of men, with adaptation to their life. But to this day men are to see God in His works and animate simple forms of nature with the sense of His presence.

Now in thus following the guidance of natural phenomena without us, and of spiritual phenomena of equal reality within, we are greatly dependent on the individual character of our own minds: there is a necessity of divergence, and a risk of difference and misunderstanding. Nevertheless impressions drawn from moral beauty, as for example any person's conception

of the Beatitudes, are ideas of actual experience and, as we apprehend, inalienable and imperishable. They are certainly imperfect, but they long towards perfection; they indicate reality, and cannot be dismissed as nothing.

The mental and moral image of righteousness or purity is as real a thing as the mental image of a mathematical line. We all believe in that for mathematical purposes; but there is nothing of the kind in the physical world. We cannot draw or see it: that which we draw to represent it is in fact a superficies. But a mathematical line may be conceived of as the junction of two adjacent superficies of different colours. So it may; and if it be said, take away the two superficies and what becomes of the line, a mathematician-moralist might answer, it is gone like the presence of the just; but the inner eye has seen it and its idea is as real a thing as the idea of sweet remembrance of the just. One is as really present and as gratifying to my intellect as the other to my emotions. The junction of colours is an illustration I had not before; and I can vary it. I can judge of the nearest way from point to point of a parallelogram by painting one triangular half of it black and the other half white. Further, I can judge of the

beauty or the character of a face by the same means. By drawing a silhouette profile in black (as the Greek maiden outlined her lover's shadow) and by removing it again, I get a similar idea of a beautiful line, with countless associations thrown in: I might get a similar idea of a noble or villainous profile. And as an abstract line, as a variable curve which I can see within my head and know by memory, that vanished line may abide with me for ever.

This is in fact a conclusive argument for the reality of ideas, and indeed of other spiritual impressions. While I am I, my thoughts are parts of me. On the hypothesis that God made me, even though as a reed that can think, He gives me pleasure and happiness unmixed in and through a certain class of thoughts here. Now He may make me happy even to blessedness for ever in a future state: and His method or means of so doing may be the higher development of these thoughts, of beauty or what not, which are present with me here. And this brings us to similar orders of ideas or thoughts: to those called of love, of hope, aspiration, and so on. The first thing you know about these things is that they are parts of your mind desiring to know or possess something precious and attainable, not yet attained. They are

evidence of the existence of their object as far as à priori evidence can go; at all events, to have had such ideas is an inalienable experience. They may not go far by themselves; but when conjoined with other testimony they add materially to its importance.

The fact is, Christian people believe that the blessedness they look for is not wholly unknown, but that foretastes and anticipations of it exist on earth. These are deniable; and they must be denied with absolute determination, by every person who rejects the Christian Faith. If they exist they are irrefragable, and prove Christ Lord of all; if they do not, then His servants are in a real sense of all men most miserable: as those who let them pass unaccounted for are of all men least logical.

CHAPTER IX.

SIGHT, HEARING, AND IMAGINATION.

THE senses of sight and hearing have always been considered as distinct from the others in their appeal to the intellectual, rational, and moral powers. The others seem specially adapted to men's physical welfare; and these to his spiritual education. We may therefore suppose, accepting what is told us in the Apocalypse and elsewhere, that there will be something analogous to them in a future condition of being, whatever becomes of the organs adapted to perception in this world. The natural eye itself has not seen, nor the physical ear heard; but ideas have been acquired through them as instruments, and will present themselves in some other way when these exist no longer. We know not what our consciousness shall be like, in a presence incomprehensible, in a glory inconceivable, in space not local, in eternity immeasurable by time: but it must have relation to our feeble consciousness here.

It has been shown in another work how beauty in form, colour, and splendour, has always

been felt to convey symbolic ideas of God; and in Ezek. i. in particular, as in the closely connected descriptions in the Apocalypse, we have form, splendour, and colour, described as part of an actual vision or revelation in the spirit. Of whatever nature it may be, there is perception as by the eye and by the ear; and extreme delight by perception. The evangelist is aware of a voice, as it were a trumpet talking to him; of articulate words like the most piercing and commanding sound which can be heard on earth. So he hears a voice as of song, with music intense and thrilling like harp-notes, not as the bodily ear pulsates to actual strings, but as in the spirit. Perception and association remain in the spirit, independent of corporeal organs: and enjoyments are there analogous to the highest and purest we know of here. All this has been the subject of comment for centuries. But one thing more may be noticed by way of caution to us against too eager or too detailed realisation—that had these great descriptions gone into further detail, into anything like artistic descriptions of the glorious things vouchsafed to St. John in spiritual sight and sound, they would have utterly confused the modern imagination, and have produced the same sort of absurd results which are

forced on us in railing accusation by non-Christian critics. Imaginations of splendour based on colour, light, and magnitude, the rainbow like sapphire and emerald, the raiment exceeding white, a sea as of jasper and of glass mingled with fire, convey the fullest sense of glory to the Eastern mind. They may impress our Western thoughts perhaps as strongly, though Greece and Italy have so widely developed our ideas of beauty as well as glory, and though centuries of art and meditation have made Heaven somewhat anthropomorphic in our thoughts, by populating it with remembrances of saints gone before. Indeed, considering that we believe that Our Lord ascended with His human body into Heaven, we need not be specially terrified by the word anthropomorphism in our thoughts about it. Still there are limits which must not be transgressed. For instance, Oriental colour and brightness commend themselves to modern thought at once, but Oriental music would not do so: and it will be seen by all who sympathise with these descriptions as prospective realities, how wonderfully they are written for all time, and for the imaginations of successive races, living and dying in hope. We shall endeavour to trace the Church's original and simple view of how

heaven should be represented pictorially for awhile down the stream of iconic tradition, till new powers of the human genius and the restored naturalism of Greece culminated in the Michel-angelesque revolution. Enough has been said of vulgar errors of conception. We use that adjective under protest, as they have often a genuine and pathetic side when made in simplicity. Still, simple people should be satisfied with the words of Holy Scripture, and when they are so, their ideas will be no more vulgar than John Bunyan's. But we Christians have a right to enumerate a few instances of celestial imagery on our side, which are not exactly vulgar. Most different men framed them, but one thought they had in common about Ezekiel and the Apocalypse. They all expected to see the reality, symbolised by those sights to the eye of the seer, themselves for themselves one day. Giotto the shepherd, and his friend Durante or Dante Alighieri, talked at Padua over the former's Arena paintings as things real. Brother John of Fiesole was just like John Milton or John Bunyan in expecting and desiring to go to what he wrote of in his language of crimson, and amber, and azure. Buonarotti and the dyer's son of Venice after all strove with real thoughts

heaven they hoped to see; though who

could know better than they that marble and canvas never could be *like* it? If a number of men will feed their minds exclusively on materialist polemics, and allow no other form of thought, their ideas of heavenly things will be contemptuous, and also contemptible: and they will come into sharp conflict with metaphysics and historical philosophy as well as the Christian creeds. "By spiritual life," truly observes Prof. G. Smith, "we do not mean the life of a disembodied spirit or anything supernatural or unscientific. We mean a life, the motives of which are beyond the world of sense, and the aim of which is an Ideal, individual and collective; which may be approached but cannot be attained under our present conditions; and the conception of which involves the hope of an ulterior and better state."

This, in carefully abstract terms, expresses just what Angelico and Angelo both felt about their own spiritual life and its hopes: and if they had not felt those hopes, neither of them could have painted what they did, each in his day, in the Vatican and elsewhere. Men of inferior power have fainter imaginations and less might in symbols of glory and love, and the infinite. Evidently, some chosen persons are enabled to draw nearer to God in their

ideal of Him than others. Yet the child who thinks he would like to take his hymn-book to heaven, follows in their way with little footsteps, thinking as a child. Infidel savants frequently, like Macbeth, have no children, or they carefully guard their minds from superstition. But nobody who is not in this sense superstitious will ever understand Tintoret or Michael Angelo, or the heart of any Christian writer, or painter, or seamstress, or artisan, or ploughman.

No doubt speculation, endeavouring to express itself as to what heaven may be *like*, is a different thing from simple belief in heaven. It must use earthly images to express the heavenly. It is the work of imagination; and imagination is of the individual. Nobody can think seriously of a definite prospect of being made literally pure of all sin and comforted for all sorrow, without thinking of his own sins and sorrows. It is his only way of realising the promise; and we must be allowed to say, that that is why heaven appears so real a thing to many apparently weak, dull, or uncultured persons, who are troubled about their sins. That is why penitence is necessary to hope. A good many just persons of modern times seem to think of themselves as needing no repentance, and consequently no redemption. It is, no doubt, a

comfortable persuasion; very like that of a Pharisee, without burden of creed or ordinances. But if a man feels himself, on the whole, good enough here, it narrows his views of future happiness, because he does not look to being better, but only to being better off. And in middle age, when all tastes fail and the powers of enjoyment are greatly diminished, a comfortable, self-satisfied person does not know very well how he can be better off; he dreads the shock and change of departure from this world, and quite naturally ceases to look for another with hope, or to want to go anywhere else. And indeed men of greater or the greatest intellectual power and personal amiability, like Charles Lamb[1], if without the active personal

[1] "I would fain lay my finger upon the spoke of the great wheel. I am not content to pass away like a weaver's shuttle. Those metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. I am in love with this green earth, the face of town and country, the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security (!) of streets. . . . My household gods plant a terrible fixed foot, and are not rooted up without blood. . . . A new state of being staggers me. Sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful glass, and candle-light, and fireside conversations, and innocent vanities and jests, and *irony itself*,—do these things go out with

hope of being one day made perfect in spirit, get involved in harmless use-and-wont of this world, and identify happiness with their own present habits of life. Whether contented here or not, they cannot lift up their hearts to distant hills and a land that is so very far off. Perhaps they are like the Witch of Vesuvius; life is not pleasant to them, but death is dreadful only. Perhaps, and in many cases, they believe and hope, but have not tried to realise or imagine; they have not had time to muse on fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore, and the beatific vision, and being forgiven and perfected, and made able to bear it. We have not thought of what heaven is, and are consequently apt to be mortified and confused by infidel views about Christian hopes, which attribute foolish expectations and low ideals to us, which in fact we do not hold. This is the real mischief and danger of all the cultured raillery we enjoy so much about a heaven of psalm-singing. For the present, whether men cling to penitent expectation of forgiveness or not, they, generally speaking, have clearer knowledge of pain than of pleasure, and can understand it better when

life? . . . Whatever thwarts, or puts me out of my way, brings death into my mind. All partial evils, like humours, run into that capital plague-sore," &c.

they are promised an end of all their troubles, than when they think of a beginning of the fulness of joy, which after all they fancy would put them out a good deal.

It is quite clear, and Dante's "Purgatorio" turns entirely on the thought, that the Christian view of heaven depends on penitence. You are not yet fit to be there, and you desire to be there—what change then do you desire in yourself? The great modern difficulty, as we have seen, is that so many will not realise the necessity of any change in themselves. A life of crowded competition, of self-assertion only to keep one's place, of self-advertisement for the sake of life, of self-satisfaction cultivated to give one strength to take one's own part,—may end in worldly success, or it may not. Its success may result in a tremendous egotism; its failure may result in discontent or rage;—in conditions in which the mind preys on itself, is narrowed in its outlooks, returns upon itself in this world and goes not forth towards any other. The Successful does not want to be changed; the Disappointed wants everything but himself to be changed. Either would be glad to be rid of some forms of trouble, which perhaps the first can bear most easily here. Both, when they come to think of heaven by the negative way,

find their troubles are connected with what they may call mistakes or frailties, but to which their neighbours sometimes give rougher names, and which Christian people classify, with some personal incivility, as sins. One man has made a fortune by hard and sharp practice; another has muddled one away by self-indulgence. Neither likes to be told there is a charge against him, and that he must hear of it, and that his unscrupulousness or self-indulgence will have to be gone into, before his soul can be set free from the consequences of either. Both, if they think of a state after death, confine themselves to protest against anything disagreeable in it. They will have rest, of course; they will go to it like well-filled guests, or they will stray to it like wearied pilgrims, or they will lie down like tired children, or they will have the sleep of nothingness like mutineers of the earth, trying to proclaim themselves God's failures. But there shall be no punishment, they will not endure a retributive theory of the future life. And not only does the Christian Faith hold one, but all other religions do so too; and so they arrive at the modern state of alienation from all definite religion whatever[1].

[1] The quotation just taken (p. 117) from Charles Lamb (Essays of Elia, New Year's Eve, p. 34; by E. Ollier, Hotten)

Now it may be said of many excellent persons, who as we trust will be accepted and forgiven saints at some date, that if they were placed in heaven or anywhere else with other persons, like them or unlike, there would be no rest within the radius of their presence or operation. It is also true, and we feel it of ourselves, that we cannot imagine any condition, state or occupation which would be delightful to us for ever: not to us being what we are. The question naturally follows, What amount of change do we expect in ourselves? Granting penitence, granting the desire of purity, what shall we be like when we are made perfect in them? What and how much will be left of us when all our sins and trouble are over and gone, and nothing

is made regretfully enough. He nowhere denies or repels the Christian Faith, but seems to show painfully that he never thought about it. He had perhaps an elvish enjoyment in shocking a large class of persons to whom he thought confusion was due. But there is too much natural outcry and shrinking of nerves from Death as King of Terrors, to let us think of this passage as mere jest. Mr. Ollier, in his preface, most rightly chooses it as expressing the key-note of Lamb's character; referring also to his period of insanity before the sad catastrophe of Mary Lamb's madness. No one can blame Lamb: we can only say that a definite hope would have made him strong out of weakness, and have enabled him to face the miseries of his life, as well as his fear of deliverance.

any more, but washed out in His blood Who died for the iniquities of us all? How far shall we know ourselves without thrills, or pangs, or sores, or all-searching pain, or broken nerves and sick hearts? What memory will be allowed of a life well ended? Nay, what sense of personal identity will be left to one whose chief and crowning idea must be shared with all saints,—that Christ died for him and that he is with Christ?

Well, there will be this idea or spiritual contemplation, with its corresponding emotions of love and gratitude; and they may take possession wholly of the restored and forgiven spirit. We do in fact experience such feelings here in an imperfect way. They may then embrace our whole being. With them begins the account of positive happiness; they will be the spiritual atmosphere of the soul. And though there is great interest in speculations on possible memory of the struggle of past life on earth; on lessons learnt for heaven by suffering here, and still modifying our spiritual existence in its higher state, we can only look on them as possibilities. It doth not yet appear what we shall be—nor, in consequence, how far we shall be concerned with what we have been.

But it seems necessary to understand that

evil shall cease, that when there is no more curse there will be no more striving against the penal destinies of men and things which now occupy the greater part of our life; and therefore that the greatest and most laudable activities of the earthly life will be at an end, and other employment or occupation be substituted for them. It is true that by the analogy of qualities, which we believe to be God's gifts, and which are here great blessings to us, because they sustain us against evil, we are enabled to argue in the direction of our perfect blessedness. It may partly consist in indefinite development of these gifts; and thus talents or faculties given us here may reappear in higher forms hereafter, as with the rudiments of virtues mastered here.

But we certainly shall be changed, though we may recognise ourselves and each other. The prospect of many mansions in our Father's house seems to provide for all conceivable differences of character and condition; only we had better be moderate in estimating such differences, and not construe that great and divine promise according to human interpretations. There are curious anthropomorphisms in the anticipations of many excellent persons who are apt to perpetuate their dislikes. The text

of "many mansions" has been often commented on with sceptical humour, reflecting on unhappy divisions of good men here, and implying that they will continue to find each other intolerable in the world to come. Indeed we have known a highly unnecessary satisfaction expressed at it by most exemplary people, as by a late and truly lamented old lady, who hoped at the death of a confidential servant, with whom she had lived and quarrelled for many years, "That some place would be found in heaven *bad* enough for Jane."

There is no doubt that Christian expectations are both active and contemplative—not that one need exclude the other. The celebrated forecast of Socrates seems to have combined both in a manner peculiar to himself; he looked for a state of perpetual exetasis or examination, like that which he had practised, of men and their ideas on earth. No doubt in the mind of Plato, and indeed of its original propounder, this amounted to a hope of indefinite progress in knowledge of divine truth. But Socrates' system of exetasis on earth required a constant supply of ignorant persons under the impression that they knew everything. Had he lived in the present time he might have found his idea of heaven locally realised in some of our seats of

learning. But it is certainly a strange thing to think of, that the best man and mind in Greece could not altogether forget the afflictions of presumptuous ignorance, and so arrived at the notion of a heaven of irony. However, this and another later example may be taken as stock instances of the way in which good, well-taught, and refined people, reasoning anthropomorphically from their own consciousness, can only realise a heaven for themselves, and all in their own way. We remember an article somewhere in the earlier strata of the "Contemporary Review," where an opinion was expressed (evidently by a person of active benevolence as well as literary power) that the state of the blessed would be one of remedial activity or combat with evil; not unmixed with anxiety at least, if untouched by suffering. This strikes an anxious person not unacquainted with trouble as an almost disconcerting prospect. We had hoped the wicked would cease from troubling; and it appears that the righteous at all events will not. We still hope that a spiritual existence may be raised above contest, that the Lord's reign over all things will exclude that necessity, and that, at all events, Paradise, or some part of it, may exclude fuss. And the fact is, that wrong or

vulgar conceptions of an asserted reality are apt to dispirit those who do not fully believe in it; and that thoroughly unspiritual conceptions of the world of spirits darken counsel concerning it. This is not diminished by modern partisanship and hero-worship. We are given to co-operation and combination for all purposes, and not least for adoration of some living ideal. We have Carlyle, Ruskin, and Browning societies; they may only be unions for mutual improvement, and the reading of papers by young aspirants, and a certain amount of harmless incense, which one offers and everybody smells. But hero-worshippers should remember, at least if they care at all about Christian thought on grave matters, that they are adoring men after all, and men who are like themselves in all the great prospects of the soul. The author of the article above mentioned had a consuming admiration for Dr. Livingstone and his labours, and permitted himself the extraordinary statement, that a heaven or state of future happiness would be deficient and inadequate if it did not provide a field for future labours like those which gained Dr. Livingstone immortal honour in this world. He thought a missionary must always be on mission, and that the Doctor would feel "indolent and super-

annuated," being with Christ, if he could not have a "great dark continent" to live and labour and suffer in. Of course, by parity of reasoning, other ministerial occupations would expect immortal perpetuation; which involves us in sad confusion, because, as they are all remedial, and part of the great struggle against evil, they seem to necessitate a full supply of that in a place where the one common hope has hitherto been to get entirely rid of it.

Misconceptions of this kind seem to arise naturally in a time of secular education, when definite religious teaching is absent. At our present stage of transition, Christian benevolence is still taught and practised; sometimes without Christian faith, sometimes with imperfect instruction and much crudity of thought. The consequence is that popular conceptions of heaven are often erroneous though sincere; and often from poverty of thought, or harmless vulgarity of language, they become grotesquely wrong, and sadly offend highly cultured persons, whose judgment deserves attention, and whose devotion is not necessarily diminished by their exercise of judgment. What we call good taste may not be in itself a spiritual quality; but we shall probably see that unspirituality produces a degree of bad taste which often

places sincere though narrow religion in an uninviting light, and its professors at perhaps undeserved disadvantage.

A chapter on Christian representations of the heavenly state or kingdom of God may follow, which will refer for illustration rather to painting than to theological or poetic description; the literature of the latter subject being too extensive for a small modern work like this.

CHAPTER X.

CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY OF HEAVEN.

It is impossible either to avoid or to exhaust the subject of theological or poetic description of a future state of happiness in a small work like this. Its object is to illustrate the definite anticipations of believers; to show that their hopes are based on spiritual phenomena already begun in this world and continuable into the next; to observe that if natural beauty is symbolic of the divine, so is moral beauty, and yet more closely: and that the future happiness of those who have sought moral beauty through its Ideal, may be logically conjectured of accordingly. And as this work was a good deal provoked by published misconceptions of what Christian men really do hope for, it had to deal with that subject. Theologically, we have had to plead that our Church's views are neither exclusive, vindictive, nor contemptible. In the way of poetic anticipation, reference to Dante, Milton, and Bunyan seems sufficient, partly because of their constant reference and final dependence on scriptural authority, and partly that when they

digress from that, as Milton in his hill,-dale,-and-vegetation description of Paradise, they obviously fall beneath their subject and themselves.

It has seemed in fact that much revelation or unveiling by the Holy Spirit to the human spirit has been vouchsafed us; that that is probably enough for us; and that all great or true ideas are virtually derived from this source, and from no otherwhence. Accordingly it might be expected that Christian iconography would be strictly scriptural in its attempts; and this will be found to be the case during the whole primitive period. And iconography—that is to say, such monuments of it as are left us—has this special advantage for our purpose, that it was, in the nature of it, addressed to the mind of the whole Church or assembled congregation; and that it represents the imaginations which clergy and teachers in those days would have the people form. Now we find, as has been fully asserted in other books and is nowhere denied, that there is change and progress in the character of church-representations of heaven, which prevail; in one form or another, from the fourth century. This may be briefly described by saying, that in the earliest works heaven is conceived of purely and simply as the presence of the Lord. Such portrait-images of

Him as are found in the Catacombs are probably of nearly the same date as the carvings of the earlier sarcophagi, also found in them. The Lord's portrait in a cubiculum (or chapel) may be no more than a symbolical repetition of His promise to be with His people gathered together. The Good Shepherd of the Catacombs[1] certainly has this meaning, with further allusion to His parable of His work for this people in this world. Still, the Church on earth and its representations are of course a different matter from the Church in heaven. It may be that in the first two or three centuries, when His actual presence on earth was a vivid tradition of memory, the Church thought it enough to set forth in painted symbol His Incarnation and human presence as a fact. It was natural that things should take the course they did, and that by the sixth century it should be felt proper to set before all the congregation their hope of His final appearing; so that His portrait in church was no longer the simple Imago Clypeata, a countenance, the faint ideal of

[1] Fully described by the Italian antiquaries ad locum: also in "Art Teaching of the Primitive Church" (chapter on Christian Sculpture), and in an article on that subject in the Church Quarterly Review, October 1880. Photographed and published by Mr. J. H. Parker, C.B.

divine and human beauty and holiness, but the full-length figure, generally done with all the freshly developed brilliancy of mosaic, of the Lord at His coming in glory, with saints, and perhaps with the Virgin Mother. Such are the great surviving pictures of SS. Cosmas and Damianus and St. Prassede at Rome, and of the two churches of St. Apollinaris at Ravenna. But before we describe them, or try to imagine what a fairly well-instructed Christian of those days would have thought of them, it will be better to go back to the earlier sarcophagi. They are part of what is called, often harmlessly enough, funereal or sepulchral religion. They occasionally point out some of the efforts of thought made by bereaved and loving persons about their dead. That those thoughts often amounted to sure and certain hope in Christ is proved by the inscriptions, to which we give a few references; but the subject is far too wide for this place. But it must be remarked that the hope in Christ stands far above, and is generally set forth without any special allusions to personal recognition or renewal of earthly ties. Little is said about them; they are fully admitted and acknowledged: but their continuance and development in the world to come is left entirely to its Lord, Who is Love, and

the fountain of it. And it is partly in imitation of this reference that the fulfilment and renewal of the love of this world has been scarcely noticed hitherto in this book. It may best conclude with some few and limited speculations on that subject, as on other aspirations of the human spirit here, which seem indeed of God, but which are not fully realised here, and lead to Him only behind the veil of flesh. They are indeed evidences and even beginnings of a blessedness prepared for us; but we know not yet what we or it shall be.

Two famous Christian sarcophagi, the earliest known exactly by consular dates, may be taken as representing many others. One is the far-famed resting-place of Junius Bassus, of the great Christian house of the Anicii; he had been consul, and he died A.D. 359, under Constantius, in the consulship of Hypatius and Eusebius, in the sad times of Liberius. The other is another Anician monument, the coffin of Probus and Proba. Both will be found figured in Aringhi's Roma Subterranea[1], and are the first given in the original plates of Bosio, and the derivative work of Bottari, between which Aringhi's holds the middle place.

On Bassus' tomb the Lord is represented

[1] Vol. i. pp. 276, 281, &c.

twice, in the centre of each of the two rows of carved panels, upper and under, into which the front of the sarcophagus is divided. The lower subject is His lowly entrance into Jerusalem; but above He stands over the veiled figure of Uranus, which represents the firmament, and is seen as coming with clouds. This seems to connect these sculptures with the mosaics in respect of subject. The other panels are occupied by Old Testament typical events, or their realisations in the New; the Lamb appears above the spandrels of the dividing columns as baptizing and working miracles, and the whole is laden with imagery of Christ; but there is no more definite promise made to man here, than that He is all, and He shall come again. That seems enough, and no representation of the dead is given, though many saints are carved on the sides and back of the stone chest.

In the tomb of Probus and Proba, of almost the same date, natural and full concession is made to human affection. On the back of the monument the husband and wife either part or meet again with tears; two other figures, perhaps of kinsfolk, standing at the sides. The rest of those sides is strigilated, or cut in spiral grooves; but on the real front Christ stands bearing the Cross of Glory, on the Rock of the Four Rivers:

and that representation of Him is constantly repeated in other carvings. Their import really is, that as here, so in the future condition, His presence is all, and is enough for the happiness of the faithful: a lesson which seems highly appropriate to the spiritual needs and aspirations of our own day. The sculptures in Aringhi, at pp. 293, 301, 303, and 307, may be compared with this, all representing Christ in glory, with Apostles and the symbolic Lamb and Cross, appealing to His sacrifice.

In the great mosaics the same idea seems to have been richly and eagerly developed as the artists began to work in colour, and indulge their natural and semi-Oriental taste for splendour in that direction. It has sometimes been considered barbaric; and no doubt colour has always been admirably used by barbaric hands: but it has, at all events, been adopted from early times by the Christian Church, and been the greatest artistic accomplishment of her first workers. The earliest design, well fitted to adorn the vault of an arcosolium or small church, is like that of the sarcophagi, the Lord bearing the triumphal cross between two adoring angels or saints, frequently St. Peter and St. Paul. Such was, or still is, the lost mosaic of St. Agatha in Ravenna, supposed to have been carried to

Russia. Then, as the workmen advanced in skill and daring, and with larger spaces and greater means, the design increased in its number of figures, the older background of golden terrace gave way to ingenious attempts at representing the firmament, which sculpture had symbolised. The four mystic Zoa or Apocalyptic creatures were early added, which is the less surprising, as they unite the imagery of the Old and New Testaments, and form part of the vision of Ezekiel, as of the Revelation of St. John. Then the symbols of the Church militant on earth are added, separated by the mystic Jordan from the Heaven in the upper apse. This, and the spaces above the Arch of Triumph, represent the presence of the Lord in glory, the Beatific Vision[1]; and to Him all other forms are subordinated. All adore Him, and in most instances His form greatly exceeds all others in size, so that He frequently seems, as in the great mosaic of St. Prassede, to come with clouds, and to fill His Temple and all things with the towering presence of God made Man.

These works have been repeatedly and fully described, and are all accessible in Mr. Parker's photographs, many of them in facsimile mosaic

[1] See "Art Teaching of the Primitive Church," p. 153, and chapter on Mosaics. S.P.C.K., 1874.

at South Kensington. Their power of colour and feeling, and their stern or grotesque simplicity of form and feature, require no comment here. Our point here is that in its early apprehension of heaven the Christian mind was taught to look entirely to Christ, and that as His second coming was more and more passionately desired by the suffering faithful on earth, it was more vividly imaged above their altars and choirs. It may just be noticed that the first instance of a patron saint's appearance in the apse, taking the central place, is in St. Agnese, without the walls of Rome, where the mosaics date from Pope Honorius, A.D. 626–638. The Blessed Virgin sits in the apse of St. Maria in Dominica (adorned by Paschal I, A.D. 820) holding the Lord, represented as a small man rather than a child. These point to the beginnings of actual image-worship; and we are the less concerned with them, as they are virtually mediaeval and not primitive.

But about the eleventh century takes place the great dark age and mediaeval transition, which adds forms representing judgment, hell, and the condemnation of human souls. These appeared earlier in the MSS., particularly in Northern ones; and had the spirit of the early Church been such as Gibbon implies that it

was, from his favourite passage in Tertullian, there can be no doubt that painted hells enough would be found on the walls or in the records of early Christian churches. They are not there. Nor has the Church, who has never dared to deny eternal punishment, formulated it in the Apostles' or the Nicene Creed. She has looked to her Lord and kept silence, except from His words[1], which contain sufficient elements of awe and dread forewarning.

With the middle ages begin mediaeval definition and delineation, until all is summed up in the calculated construction and accurate measurements of the Divine Comedy. It has been well remarked that the power of Dante's imagination is shown not so much by its audacity as its precision. But his severity is unquestioned; and it is paralleled rather by that of Orgagna, his successor in the graphic art, than by Giotto, who possessed his personal friendship. In both, the conceptions of bodily torment are naturally more vivid than anticipations of joy, which in the very nature of it is mysterious and hid with God. It will be understood that when Eastern views of asceticism and destruction of the flesh

[1] See article 'Hell, Representations of,' Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities, vol. i.

came to be engrafted on the natural ferocity of Scandinavia or Northern Germany, graphic art and religious imagination of vengeance would never spare horror, and sometimes, as in Orgagna's Inferno at Pisa, be guilty of abominable detail in its representation. Before we follow this further it may be repeated that by the introduction of Hell and Judgment into sacred art an entire change from primitive pictorial teaching was at once effected. For certainly eight hundred years the Church did not set forth representations of damnation, still less of torture, before the people. She set forth the coming and continued presence of Christ as He promised to return. Till then He and His desired presence are all,—all that she would apparently let the faithful have symbolised before their eyes for meditation. Details of happiness, on the contrary, were not made common, further than in the words of Scripture; and substituted legend in the absence of Scripture made undesirable additions to mediaeval thought. We have seen how modern fancies of heaven may wander into the grotesque, and even the ridiculous; and of course a more hideous way is open to those who will indulge in imaginations of torment. We have to do with neither in this place, repeating our Church's prayer for mercy upon all men.

And here too we refrain from detailed imaginations of mutual recognition or reunion, fully holding the hope of both. If the faithful and forgiven retain their identity and continue themselves in the world to come, it seems to follow that they will know each other. If all their sins are washed away they will know each other in a different light. When all their spirits are filled with one joy all spirits will be one, in a sense near enough for the dearest whom death has divided. We do not know any nobler, farther-sighted, or more practically scriptural form of thought, than Tennyson's sonnet, where Death bids Love depart from Eden, "whose walks are his":—

> "Love wept, and spread his sheeny vans for flight;
> Yet ere he parted, said, 'This hour is thine.
> Thou art the shadow of Life; and as the tree
> Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,
> So in the light of great Eternity
> Life eminent creates the shade of Death.
> The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall;
> But I shall reign for ever over all.'"

We have no quarrel with such high and beautiful speculations as the Physical Theory of a Future State of Dr. Isaac Taylor, nor indeed with similar speculations, while they continue speculative: but faith is prior to speculation. It is well for Christian people to be able to give

account to each other and to their adversaries of what they definitely do expect by their holy books. And if that presents itself in a light not ignoble or grotesque, but with subtle and awful appeal to certain spiritual qualities and tendencies assuredly now at work in us, it asserts itself distinctly against hostile criticism. If it presents itself as entirely and infinitely satisfactory to all human love and aspiration for the morally good and morally beautiful, it opens a prospect quite infinitely worth having. If it further presents itself as an entire fulfilment of all desire of good or beauty through One Personal Good, divine and human, giving of Himself to all, in whom all partake for ever and ever, in whom all hope and symbolism are for ever fulfilled, it presents itself as incalculable happiness for ever. If that happiness be called beatific vision, it justifies the use of human ideas of beauty to convey it to the hopeful imagination here. If we find that such use of such ideas has been made by heathens most highly gifted, and least far from the kingdom of God, we do well to use them also, seeing that Holy Scripture also uses them.

The object of this little book is so far attained: yet a few more remarks may be made on well-known or typical representations of heaven

in or after the earlier middle age. Angelico's work has been referred to as parallel with the child-like realisations of pleasure held out by Luther to his children; and we really do not know what to say to a Paradise of elderly Dominicans dancing for ever with angels in deep flowery mowing-grass, except that we think the brother's brethren must have loved him for it, and that that love brought them nearer to the real heaven; which no doubt consists neither in meadows nor in dancing. Nor do we think Angelico really thought anything of the kind. This is the symbolism of simple hope, like Bunyan's or the old carolist's—"O that we were there!" The last cantos of Dante's Purgatorio may be compared with this, and indeed it is no use taking the Paradise without the Purgatory, since Dante, even better than the professed monk, strikes in that poem the great keynote of perfect repentance as ground of all future happiness, as the determined process of restoration by which the soul is made pure and fit to see God, and enjoy the beatific vision. In entering the gates of purgation the sevenfold mark of sin is engraved on your forehead. Till that is off, you desire nothing except that in God's time He shall take it off. When one of the seven purgations is done, then you desire

for the first time to advance to the pains which shall remove another. When all are done away, and not before, you are enabled and made to desire to draw nearer and proceed into the presence of God. All the theological or religious difference between ourselves and Dante here seems really to amount to this—that he symbolised and described in figure the divine progress he trusted he had made in his earthly life, and that we avowedly and literally hope to make it here, or that here it may be made perfect in us. To all intents and purposes, with the end of the Inferno he ceases to be mediaeval and becomes simply Catholic-Christian.

The ideal of Dante certainly affected that of Orgagna, or at least there can be no doubt that the grim vision of judgment in the Campo Santo bears the same impress of mediaeval and ascetic severity as the Inferno. The difference against the painter may be unavoidable, but it is unquestionable that his Inferno entirely overpowers his Heaven, both being inferior to the earthly Triumph of Death; and that while it is possible to close Dante's first vision and read of Heaven, the latter is not only pushed aside in the process, but invaded by distress at the supposed victory of Death and Hell over the children of men. The Saviour speaks the words of doom;

the Virgin Mother bends sickening beside Him, raised to the heights of Mariolatry only to suffer as a second Eve. The angels soar and wheel like rooks in a gale, weeping and wringing their hands, and saving whomsoever they can, hauling and tugging shamefully for fat and tonsured souls. The whole work seems to prove that Orgagna gave as free course to his genius, and to a really powerful and imaginative turn for horror, quite as much as Michael Angelo, who followed him in latter days. Both, in fact, entirely broke with the primitive and symbolic treatment of their great subject, which may have been feebler in the forces of human genius, but was certainly more earnestly spiritual, and implied a faith in the reality which he does not. The idea of a fat monk fought for by a footless angel against a bat-winged fiend with a head like a pug-dog would degrade a Byzantine apse more than the Sistine Chapel, which also has its flayed St. Bartholomew and other abominations. The fact is, that as there is no more curse or contrast of evil in heaven, there is no more grotesque. If there be laughter there, it is of pure love and tenderness, such as we have heard from women; and there certainly will be no call there for grim joking or the incisive humour of modern scepticism. It will be seen how far

the popular mind of the middle ages had fallen even from the attempt to conceive of joy in the presence of the Lord. The monk ruled by terror, as the bishop by the sword. There is, it must be said, no Gothic ideal of heaven before the republication of the Holy Scriptures.

We must not omit, in justice to Orgagna, the great and woeful imagery conveyed by the action of the Lord as judge of mankind; and this can only be given in quotation from Prof. Ruskin, derived in idea from Didron's Iconographia, but expressed with a power peculiarly his own, in his Oxford Lectures for 1873[1], and it is hereby commended to all readers:—

"You all remember the action of Michael Angelo's Christ—the right hand raised as if to cast a thunderbolt, and the left closed across His breast, as if refusing all mercy. The action is one which appeals to persons of very ordinary sensations, and is very naturally adopted by the Renaissance painter, both for its popular effect, and its capabilities for the exhibition of his surgical science. But the old painter-theologian, though indeed he showed the right hand of Christ uplifted, and the left hand laid across His breast, had another meaning in the actions. The fingers of the left hand are folded

[1] Val d'Arno, p. 194.

in both the figures; but in Michael Angelo's, as if putting aside an appeal: in Orgagna's, the fingers are bent to draw back the drapery from the right side. The right hand is raised by Michael Angelo as in reprobation: by Orgagna only to show the wounded palm. And as to the believing disciples, He showed them His hands and His side, so that they were glad—so, to the unbelievers at their judgment, He shows the wounds in hand and side. They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

The Judgment of the Sistine needs no comment here, as its heaven is nugatory, as far as our purpose is concerned, whatever case may be made out for it in technical excellence. We do not hear of anatomy in the world to come, or suppose that the saints will be very muscular, or display quite so much interest in developing their restored bodies. Artistic-renaissance ideas of such matters are often quite as vulgar as those of the evangelical hymnal, and much more pedantic, without a grain of the heavenly hope to which that work appeals. That Michael Angelo possessed that hope in its fulness, and expressed it in other works of graphic art and poetry, makes it more singular that it should have been so entirely obscured in the mind of his later days by his zeal for ana-

tomical science. One man remains, south of the Alps, whose discipleship to him in drawing Prof. Ruskin sees reason to regret. But however much we may respect that feeling, we can only have more pleasure in the partial return to ancient treatment, which is made in the mightiest picture ever painted, 'The Paradise' of Tintoret. There, once more, the thought of the spectator is made to centre, through zone and zone and cycle and cycle of glorified humanity and angelic ministration, on Christ the Lord of all men. We have Prof. Ruskin's leave to quote his description of this vast work *in extenso* from his paper on Tintoret and Michael Angelo; and it makes further comment of our own unnecessary, except one observation, which is made in various forms in 'The Stones of Venice' and elsewhere. Standing between east and west, Venice was never dominated as to faith or practice by the Papacy, and held the Faith with a strong lay-religion of her own, not without relation to modern Protestantism, not unacquainted with the difficulties of varied shades of faith, not undesirous of making the best of both worlds; fully engaged with trade, fighting, and the good things of this life; but always desirous of the service and the glory of the Holy Trinity, and of God made Man. This was

a tie between her and England at the Reformation; this had a share in the friendship of Durer with Bellini and the best of her painters, and this we may think led her greatest painter back to the primitive imaginations of glory, at length, in his case, to be worked out with the full power of art and dedicated fervour of genius.

The following is the description of Tintoret's Paradise (Michael Angelo and Tintoret, pp. 27, 41): "For the Paradise—in the highest centre is Christ, leaning on the globe of the earth, which is of dark crystal. Christ is crowned with a glory as of the sun, and all the picture is lighted by that glory, descending through circle beneath circle of clouds, and of flying or throned spirits.

"The Madonna, beneath Christ and at some interval from Him, kneels to Him. She is crowned with the Seven Stars, and kneels on a cloud of angels, whose wings change into ruby fire, where they are near her. The three great Archangels, meeting from three sides, fly towards Christ. Michael delivers up his scales and sword. He is followed by the thrones and principalities of the earth; so inscribed, 'Throni-Principatus.' The Spirits of the Thrones bear scales in their hands; and of the Princedoms,

shining globes; between the wings of the last of these are the four great teachers and law-givers, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Gregory, St. Augustine, and behind St. Augustine stands his mother, watching him, her chief joy in Paradise.

"Under the Thrones are set the Apostles: St. Paul separated a little from the rest, and put lowest, yet principal; under St. Paul is St. Christopher bearing a massive globe, with a cross upon it. But to mark him as the Christ-bearer, since here in Paradise he cannot have the child on his shoulders, Tintoret has thrown on the globe a flashing stellar reflection of the sun round the head of Christ.

"All this side of the picture is kept in glowing colour; the four Doctors of the Church have golden mitres and mantles, except the Cardinal, St. Jerome, who is in burning scarlet, his naked breast glowing, warm with noble life, the darker red of his robe relieved against a white glory.

"Opposite to Michael, Gabriel flies towards the Madonna, having in his hand the Annunciation lily, large, and triple-blossomed. Above him, and above Michael, equally, extends a cloud of white angels, inscribed 'Serafini': but the group following Gabriel, and corre-

sponding to the Throni following Michael, is inscribed 'Cherubini.' Under these are the great prophets and singers and foretellers of the happiness or of the sorrow of time, David, and Solomon, and Isaiah, and Amos of the herdsmen. David has a colossal psaltery laid horizontally across his knees; two angels behind him dictate to him as he sings, looking up towards Christ: but one strong angel sweeps down to Solomon from among the cherubs, and opens a book, resting it on the head of Solomon, who looks down earnestly, unconscious of it. To the left of David, separate from the group of prophets, as Paul from the apostles, is Moses, dark-robed; in the full light, withdrawn far behind him, Abraham, embracing Isaac with his left arm; and near him, pale St. Agnes. In front, nearer, flies Raphael; and under him is the four-square group of the Evangelists. Beneath them, on the left, Noah; on the right, Adam and Eve, both floating unsupported by cloud or angel: Noah buoyed by the Ark, which he holds above him; and it is *this* into which Solomon gazes down so earnestly. Eve's face is perhaps the most beautiful ever painted by Tintoret, full in light, but dark-eyed. Adam floats beside her, his figure fading into a winged gloom, edged in the outline of fig-leaves. Far

down, under these, central in the lowest part of the picture, rises the Angel of the Sea, praying for Venice, for Tintoret conceives his Paradise as existing now, not as in the future. The Magdalen is on the right, behind St. Monica; and on the same side, but lowest of all, Rachel, among the angels of her children, gathered now again to her for ever."

It is in the same spirit that Holbein prefixes a heaven of the rejoicing faithful only to his 'Dance of Death,' as a frontispiece of comfort to its stern lessons. Of reformed art, Durer's Adoration of the Cross, at Vienna (Belvidere Gallery), from its grandeur of conception and the delicate splendour of colour, which recalls Angelico in its perfect gradations of crimson and gold, may be taken as the central work. It is a great scene between heaven and earth—all representatives of the sons of men below, and angels above, hovering in mid-air over a wide landscape of earth and sea, exactly like Turner.

A great Apocalyptic painting, by Mr. Armitage, has long dwelt in our memory, with regret that it was not on a colossal scale. The noble drawing and high idea of such figures as War on the red horse and Death on the pale seemed lost on the multitudinous canvas. And,

though unequal to it in art, Scheffer's Christus Consolator can never be forgotten in feeling or doctrine, where once more the ancient motive of concentration on the Lord is enforced, not in this case because of many-coloured splendours and blinding glory, but as the Comforter and Forgiver of sins. Men and women are before Him with their burdens; and their grief is not, and their chains fall from their hands. They look on Him whom they pierced; and He is meek and lowly, and He gives them rest.

[NOTE. It is apprehended that descriptions of Perugino and Raffaelle, and the Italian schools of devotional art, would lead to considerations of medieval use of images, and the formal worship of saints and angels. Such discussions would involve theological and polemical statements far removed from the purposes of this book. Its real drift is that of Dante's Paradise: that all final happiness of the soul centres finally in the point or fountain of all good; that various lines of progress thither exist, and are begun in this world, and are therefore important evidence to that which they seek, and give ground for hope and consolation in the presence of permitted adversaries.]

CHAPTER XI.

THE IMAGE OF GOD.

THE expression which heads this chapter has been the text of much patristic comment, and has more or less exercised all minds which have ever dwelt on their own inner nature. It involves not only a vast number of speculations and trains of thought, but has individual issues, some of them very painful and mysterious. If man was made in the Image of God, then we are so made; and what is this image, and how far have we retained it? This is a trying question to any one accustomed to self-examination; and it admits of no triumphant answer. But when we come to think of an Image or likeness of God, both moral, and also stamped in visible matter, we feel such difficulties involved as might reduce us altogether to a despondent silence. However, this book and the former one have gone on what the author conceives to be unquestionable facts, of the presence of actual traces of God's Working in the world: first in physics, in nature made by Him for good; then in man, made by Him

in His own image for Himself. These traces if denied will be as hard to dispose of by argument as are symptoms of the Fall to those who believe in God as the Maker for Good. His promise of ultimate deliverance from Evil has been considered in these pages. But our redemption extends to our restoration, and that, if it be anything, must include our return to our former nature and conditions, as made in the Image of God.

There is divergence, as it seems, in primitive thought as to a moral or material Image. *Καθ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν* is translated 'Ad Imaginem et Similitudinem Suam' by the Fathers generally. Origen draws a distinction between *εἰκών* and *ὁμοίωσις*[1]. The former (Image) is still ours, but the latter (Similitude) is reserved for our perfect state. He notes, at the same time, that Melito of Sardis (2nd century) and others had made use of too literal expressions about a corporeal nature of God. He lays down carefully that we are made in God's Image as to our reasonable soul[2]. St. Augus-

[1] In Genesim, Migne, B. P. G., vol. xii. p. 93: *Ποῦ συνίσταται τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα, ἐν σώματι ἢ ἐν ψυχῇ;*

[2] P. 96: *Τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα . . . . . ἐν τῇ λογικῇ ψυχῇ.* Reference to 1 Cor. xv. 49, St. Matt. v. 48, and St. Luke vi. 36. Also Col. iii. 10, 2 Cor. iii. 18, and 1 Cor. xi. 7.

tine's comment on the early books of Genesis is directed against Manichaean interference with the language of Scripture. He says (De Genesi c. Manichaeos, I. xvii; Migne, B. P. L. vol. xxxiv. p. 186) that spiritual likeness is alone intended, and that in fact, body and parts are attributed to God in Holy Scripture only by analogy, and not literally, as sword and spear, shield and buckler; which is exactly like Origen's example of wings and feathers, of the seat and throne of God. The early Fathers are clearly anxious to use caution against investing our thought of God with any bodily form. They endorse or enforce Minucius's able contention against making representative paintings or sculptures to help the mind to think of God, since Man is His proper Image, of His own making, and we are His Likeness[1].

This view of the moral and intellectual Image in the soul seems also to strike on the great and insuperable difference between us and the brutes, consisting in the reflective and inferring faculties, the registry of memory, and

[1] "Noverint in Catholicâ disciplinâ spirituales fideles non credere Deum formâ corporeâ definitum." The inner image of God, he says, gives man power over fishes, and birds, and the creation. "Cum dixisset 'Faciamus ad imaginem,' addidit continuo, Et habeat potestatem piscium et volatilium, etc."

the power of reference to it at will. There is no doubt that we find rudimentary or undeveloped traces of moral feeling and of inference in animals. But it is practically inexplicable, and a fearful wonder, to think how in our case they are made to work and develope each other to a quite incommensurable extent. In this Moral Image of God we were made, and it is given to His servants in some degree to develope its likeness. In Him is its absolute perfection, or the perfection of moral beauty. We call it beauty with strict correctness; because when we recognise it it awakes in us feelings of delight, which exactly resemble those aroused by the highest and purest forms of visible beauty.

Therefore, in Christ our Lord is all moral beauty, and it is a sign of Him. He is the Spiritual Image or Ideal of man at least. And as the moral beauty of the spirit is more important than that of the senses, since that certainly cannot last long, and the former may last for ever, therefore the words 'Christian Ideal' convey the same idea as the words, 'the King in His beauty.'

This need in no sense interfere with that general pursuit of concrete beauty everywhere in which a painter passes his life. It ought to

make him respect the human form above other things, the human features above all things. It ought to shew him that as the Greeks saw the image of Zeus or Athene in the human body, so the higher spiritual nature may be recognised by 'glances' in the face. And the Christian painter will shew with special pleasure what the Church believes, that the body has been worn by the God-Man; taken to Heaven with Him; immeasurably dignified after long humiliation [1].

One sentence from Dr. Liddon's Bampton Lectures [2] may close these little essays on moral and material beauty. The grand Platonism at the end will be observed.

"The Εἰκών is indeed originally God's unbegun

[1] There has been, as Tertullian says, from the Creation, an Image of God in which He has manifested Himself in human semblance: by which He has presented Himself to human senses, before He took on Him human flesh of the substance of His Mother (Adv. Praxeam, vii.).

This is discussed (in particular) in the Dissertation, Migne, B. P. L., vol. x. p. 846, on Hilary, De Trinitate: where some quotations are given, with a reference to Petavius (Lib. viii. De Trinitate, cap. ii. n. 5 sqq.) for more. Some from Prudentius (In Apotheos. contra Hæresim, etc., Poemat. i, v. 18) are very interesting. However, Petavius objects to their language, as going too far into anthropomorphism, and the annotator rightly declines to draw any conclusion.

[2] L. vi. p. 317, ed. 1868.

and unending reflection of Himself in Himself: but the εἰκών is also the organ whereby God, in His essence invisible, reveals Himself to His creatures. Thus the εἰκών is, so to speak, naturally the Creator, since creation is the first revelation which God has made of Himself. Man is the highest point in the visible universe; in man, God's attributes are most luminously exhibited, man is the image and glory of God (1 Cor. xi. 7). But Christ is the Adequate Image of God. There was no creative process external to and independent of Him; since the archetypal forms after which the creatures are modelled, and the sources of their strength and consistency of being, eternally reside in Him."

APPENDIX TO P. 60 (last line).

The Author is indebted to Dr. W. Bright, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Christ Church, Oxford, for the following remark, with other kind corrections:—

"The execution of Priscillian was not simply the execution of a heresiarch as such, but of one accused of teaching what was demoralising as well as heretical. Milman admits this clearly." (Hist. of Christianity, iii. 168, 169.)

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